The New York Times Magazine

March 22, 2020

Bernie Sanders believes America misjudged him.

Did he misjudge America?

By Robert Draper

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March 22, 2020

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Senator Bernie Sanders at a campaign rally in Austin, Tex., on Feb. 23. Page 28.

Photograph by Eli Durst for The New York Times

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Behind the Cover *Kathy Ryan, director of photography: "For this week's cover, Dan Winters photographed the Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in a Houston hotel just a day after he won the Nevada caucuses. The portrait we chose to accompany Robert Draper's profile of him shows Sanders in a moment of reflection amid the chaos of the campaign trail, just as he was surpassed by Joe Biden as the front-runner for the Democratic nomination." Photograph by Dan Winters for The New York Times.*

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Contributors

Sarah Viren — *"The Accusation," Page 34*

Sarah Viren is a writer based in Arizona and the author of the essay collection "Mine." An assistant professor at Arizona State University, she is working on a memoir and has written for such publications as Texas Monthly and Oxford American. In her first feature article for the magazine, she tells a personal story about being falsely accused. "As a writer and teacher of creative nonfiction, I spend a lot of time thinking about how we tell a story that is also true," Viren says. "So to suddenly find myself caught up in an intricate web of lies was disorienting and horrifying, yes, but it was also something I immediately knew I had to write about."

Yudhijit Bhattacharjee — *"The Terrorist Who Got Away," Page 40*

Yudhijit Bhattacharjee is a contributing writer for National Geographic and the author of "The Dinner Set Gang," forthcoming from Audible. He last wrote for the magazine about an Indian innovator who reverse-engineered sanitary pads.

Robert Draper — *"Left Behind," Page 28*

Robert Draper is a writer at large for the magazine. He last wrote about how "Medicare for All" went mainstream.

Amanda Hess — *"Sister Act," Page 22*

Amanda Hess is a critic at large for The New York Times, where she covers internet and pop culture. She last wrote a Screenland column about a college-admissions bribery scandal and the YouTube star Olivia Jade.

Alex Norcia — *Screenland, Page 7*

Alex Norcia is a staff writer for Vice. He last wrote a Screenland column about calling someone Fredo from "The Godfather."

Sam Sifton — *Eat, Page 20*

Sam Sifton is the food editor of The Times, the founding editor of NYT Cooking, an Eat columnist for the magazine and the author of the cookbook "See You on Sunday."

Dan Winters — *"Left Behind," Page 28*

Dan Winters is a photographer, writer and director who has photographed for The New York Times Magazine for over 26 years. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including a World Press Photo award and the Alfred Eisenstaedt Award for magazine photography.

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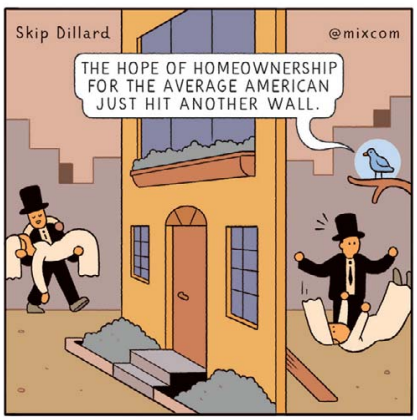
EDITOR'S NOTE

Last week we made a clarification to a passage in an essay from The 1619 Project that has sparked a great deal of online debate. The passage in question states that a primary reason the colonists fought the American Revolution was to protect the institution of slavery. This assertion has elicited criticism from some historians and support from others.

We stand behind the basic point, which is that among the various motivations that drove the patriots toward independence was a concern that the British would seek or were already seeking to disrupt in various ways the entrenched system of American slavery. Versions of this interpretation can be found in much of the scholarship into the origins and character of the Revolution that has marked the last 40 years or so of early-American historiography — in part because historians of the last few decades have increasingly scrutinized the role of slavery and the agency of enslaved people in driving events of the Revolutionary period.

That accounting is itself part of a growing acceptance that the patriots represented a truly diverse coalition animated by a variety of interests, which varied by region, class, age, religion and a host of other factors, a point succinctly demonstrated in the title that the historian Alan Taylor chose for his 2016 account of the period: "American Revolutions." If the scholarship of the last several decades has taught us anything, it is that we should be careful not to assume unanimity on the part of the colonists, as many previous interpretive histories of the patriot cause did. We recognize that our original language could be read to suggest that



protecting slavery was a primary motivation for *all* of the colonists. The passage has been changed to make clear that this was a primary motivation for *some* of the colonists. A note has been appended to the article as well.

Revision and clarification are important parts of historical inquiry, and we are grateful to the many scholars whose insightful advice has helped us decide to make this change, among them Danielle Allen, Carol Anderson, Christopher L. Brown, Eric Foner, Nicholas Guyatt, Leslie Harris, Woody Holton, Martha S. Jones, Jack N. Rakove, James Brewer Stewart and David Waldstreicher. Recently, The New York Times Magazine also hosted a public conversation about this very subject with the historians Annette Gordon-Reed, Eliga H. Gould, Gerald Horne, Alan Taylor and Karin Wulf. These five scholars also helped deepen our sense of the period's complexity. (A video of the conversation can be found online, as well as a list of suggested readings on the topic prepared by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture.)

One outcome of The 1619 Project that we are grateful for is how it has shown all of us, historians and journalists alike, how important it is to continue to work together constructively to illuminate the past.

Jake Silverstein
Editor in Chief

Readers respond to the 3.8.2020 issue.

RE: THE GREAT WALL STREET HOUSING GRAB

Francesca Mari wrote about how thousands of single-family homes are now in the hands of private-equity companies.

THE STORY, ON TWITTER

The huge wealth transfer from struggling homeowners to private-equity firms is going about as you'd expect. @PennyWriter

'I only clicked on this article because it was included in my daily news email from The Times.'

Francesca Mari's article depicts an Invitation Homes we don't recognize. We are proud to offer high-quality homes in great neighborhoods at market-competitive rents for people who are not looking to own. We are even more proud of our more than 1,100 associates who work hard every day to deliver superior service to the 80,000 American families who call our properties home. We measure that success in resident satisfaction, underscored by our 70 percent lease-renewal rate and our 96 percent occupancy rate.
Dallas Tanner, Co-Founder, President and C.E.O., Invitation Homes

RE: HIDEO KOJIMA

Adrian Chen profiled the enigmatic videogame designer.

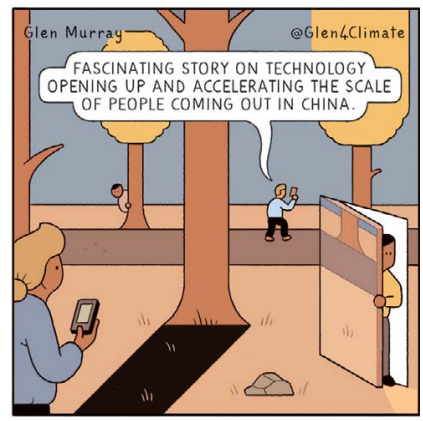
As a 48-year-old woman who literally hasn't touched a video game since the 1980s, I only clicked on this article because it was included in my daily news email from The Times. I figured I would skim it but was so absorbed in the narrative that I read every word.
Shira McKernan, Paris

RE: BLUED

Yi-Ling Liu wrote about one of the biggest gay dating apps in the world.

The writer has many good insights about L.G.B.T.Q. dating culture in China. In this era, however, it is incredible that the article focuses almost entirely on gay men. It gives little thought to lesbian or transgender dating.
Jordan Schoenfeld, Hanover, N.H.

Send your thoughts to magazine@nytimes.com.


Glen Murray
@Glen4Climate
FASCINATING STORY ON TECHNOLOGY OPENING UP AND ACCELERATING THE SCALE OF PEOPLE COMING OUT IN CHINA.

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The New York Times Magazine
JULY 14, 2019
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BY CHARLES SIEBERT

The New York Times Magazine

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Vape Crusaders

On YouTube, an anti-vaping P.S.A. is just something you click past to watch people vape. ● *By Alex Norcia* ● The YouTube video shows two young men sitting in front of a computer screen, enthralled by what they're watching and pausing, periodically, to marvel at it. They stare as a demonlike character — it resembles something from the costumed metal band Gwar — screams and tries to shred on

its guitar. The backdrop behind it shuffles through a series of apocalyptic images: a swirling orange inferno, a black-and-white mushroom cloud, a bunch of explosions. An oil refinery belches smoke as the monster holds a microphone close to his face: "Tons of corrupt filth we keep tossin'," it belts out, "sending Earth to hell in a pod-shaped coffin."

The two young men can't contain their laughter. What they're joyfully scrutinizing is a public-service announcement by Truth, an anti-nicotine initiative known for making didactic pleas aimed at teenagers. (Its approach here is an appeal to youth environmentalism: Pollutants from discarded e-cigarette pods, they're suggesting, are not an ideal addition to the planet.) The guys making fun of this are, naturally, of a different persuasion. One works for DashVapes, which describes itself as "Canada's leading retailer and distributor of authentic gear and world class e-juice." (The other is a friend.) The company produces a wide variety of YouTube clips — a handful of them now aimed at correcting what they, and other vapers, see as misinformation and paranoia coming out of the United States.

During the past year, as the so-called vaping epidemic burst into the public eye, two lines of concern peaked at the same moment: an outbreak of vaping-related illnesses and deaths, and accusations that

Adult vapers are often passionate evangelists for their hobby; they see it, after all, as genuinely lifesaving.

Juul Labs targeted youth with its advertising. (Public health officials eventually connected the illnesses with tainted and illicit THC products; Juul now faces investigations and lawsuits, though it denies any wrongdoing.) Both narratives were surely helpful to organizations like Truth and the Michael Bloomberg-funded Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, which are focused on abstinence: They essentially consider vapes to be cigarettes in modern form, allowing big tobacco to hook a new generation on nicotine just as youth smoking rates hit an all-time low.

But as those news stories received more attention — and as political figures pushed for knee-jerk regulatory fixes

Above and opening page: Screen grabs from YouTube

Photo illustration by Mike McQuade

— a community of vapers was mobilized as well, propelled by its most digitally savvy proponents: popular YouTubers and video bloggers like GrimmGreen and Matt Culley and Ryan Hall. They couldn't have expected such an intense spotlight to turn their way. But as cities and states across the country began agreeing with advocates and banning many flavored vaping products, their niche culture was pulled from obscurity and forced to adapt.

Vapers tend to fall into two sometimes-overlapping camps. The younger one includes online influencers, who have been the subject of countless documentaries and news articles — though their social stock plummeted in December, after Instagram disallowed branded content that promoted vaping. Older vapers, however, are different. They tend to see the practice as a more healthful alternative to cigarettes; it's how, they insist, they have stopped smoking. "Vaping isn't a lifestyle," goes one common refrain. "It's life or death." It's these ex-smokers who have grown into a sizable, vocal and largely Republican and libertarian coalition — and who, like the hosts at DashVapes, have become de facto political advocates for the technology. They have held rallies outside state capitol buildings and the White House. Some have been talking heads on news channels. In the fall, they popularized the slogan "We Vape, We Vote" — a warning realistic enough that it reportedly had a hand in persuading the Trump administration to back down from strong policies on vaping. Despite rumors that the administration would strip all flavored products from the market, it instead instituted a partial ban, removing only the flavored cartridges popular among teenagers; the liquids for open-tank systems, often favored by adults, would remain, and menthol received a complete pass.

Share of adolescent users of electronic vaping products who reported watching vape tricks online: **74 percent**

One thing this faction has going for it is history: It has been blossoming for at least a decade, its members meeting at trade shows and in corners of the internet. Until recently, they were more like hobbyists than anything else, swapping

stories and constructing their vaping "rigs" and "mods" with the pride of tinkering craftsmen. Many opened shops or started product lines in the hope of converting cigarette smokers to vaping — hence the nerdy sensibility of the entire cottage industry, which is full of independent stores with names like Darth Vapor. On certain levels, these advocates feel like anyone else fixated on a particular pursuit, from craft beers to classic cars. But adult vapers are often passionate evangelists for their hobby; they see it, after all, as genuinely lifesaving. And online, they are committed to moving the vaping discussion away from kids — and away from major corporate entities like Juul — and back onto onetime smokers like themselves.

As with most P.S.A.s, Truth's is easy to ridicule. It feels clueless, dated, pandering. There are shades of the overblown approach of '80s drug-war propaganda, like the implication that chemicals from disposable vape cartridges have an effect similar to, say, detonating a bomb. There is an assumption that kids are still into heavy metal. In the DashVapes segment, the vapers compare the P.S.A. to an online meme — an image of the aggressively middle-aged actor Steve Buscemi, in an episode of "30 Rock," comically trying to blend in with some teenagers. It's the very nature of P.S.A.s to be behind the curve: Youth vaping rates soared, in part, because no one with political power took note of Juul's sleek, youthful marketing until it had already succeeded. By the time advocacy groups began to act, teenagers were already moving on, replacing their Juuls with less expensive Puff Bars — disposable flavored vapes that fall into a federal policy loophole.

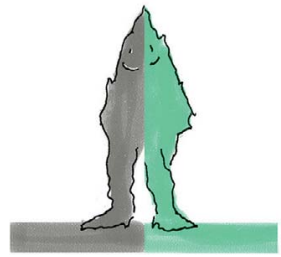
These sorts of P.S.A.s made more sense when television was a primary source of entertainment. They were inescapable — if you wanted to watch TV, you had to sit through them and let their messages sink in through the sheer force of repetition. In the age of YouTube, though, they feel futile. The site already contains a substantial ecosystem of vapers, each a click away — so many that one of them, Matt Culley, has begun dividing their ranks into generations, from the no-frills Gen Xers to the Gen Zers with their quick edits and air horns. DashVapes already provides hours and hours of sleek, well-shot, authoritative vaping content. A group like Truth can no longer command the airwaves; it has to step into an environment where it is already outnumbered, one where a video of people rolling their eyes at a P.S.A. may receive more attention than the P.S.A. itself.

These sorts of P.S.A.s made more sense when television was a primary source of entertainment. In the age of YouTube, they feel futile.

In early March, DashVapes had 404,000 subscribers on YouTube; Truth had 306,000. Nearly every time an anti-vaping group posts a new ad, DashVapes is there, publishing some sort of mocking takedown — groaning over its use of "Crank Yankers"-style puppets, or babies, or testimonials from teenagers. The young men doing the mocking vape the entire time. The comments below their videos usually share their opinions. Truth's YouTube channel, on the other hand, has its comments disabled. ◆

Poem Selected by Naomi Shihab Nye

Jane Hirshfield's poems often feel like whole landscapes, graciously embracing the widest view and the tiniest sequins at once. "Mountainal," from her new book, "Ledger," offers up that deep gaze, acknowledgment of all that is present beyond windows or worlds of humans, then realizes its own desire to be something larger than anecdotal self. Her longtime practice of Soto Zen Buddhism and her commitments to scientific knowledge and respect blend to create some of the most important poetry in the world today.



Mountainal
By Jane Hirshfield

This first-light mountain, its east peak and west peak.

Its first-light creeks:
Lagunitas, Redwood, Fern. Their fishes and mosses.

Its night and day hawk-life, slope-life, fogs, coyote, tan oaks,
white-speckled amanita. Its spiderwebs' sequins.

To be personal is easy:
Wake. Slip arms and legs from sleep into name, into story.

I wanted to be mountainal, wateral, wrenal.

Naomi Shihab Nye *is the Young People's Poet Laureate of the Poetry Foundation in Chicago, and her latest book is "Cast Away," from Greenwillow Books.* **Jane Hirshfield** *is from Northern California and is founder of #PoetsforScience. She is a chancellor emerita of the Academy of American Poets. Her new book, "Ledger," was published by Alfred A. Knopf this month.*

Illustration by R. O. Blechman

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Is It Wrong to Donate To Candidates You Can't Vote For?

I have felt uncomfortable with the idea of donating money to candidates in elections in which I have no voting rights — such as senators in states other than my own. I always believed that only those able to vote in an election and who will be directly affected by it have the right to donate to the candidates. It has become clear to me, however, that individual senators and other elected officials outside my state do indeed have a powerful effect on the entire country. Is it appropriate for me to donate to candidates in elections in which I cannot vote?

Christine, Seattle

Given that campaigns for public office in this country require citizen contributions, you are absolutely entitled to help candidates from districts and states other than your own. (Whether the way that elections are financed here is good for our democracy is another question.) As you recognize, the effects politicians have aren't confined to their immediate constituencies. On the contrary, the prospects for our country depend on who holds elective offices at every level. For one thing, representatives from each of the states in the U.S. House and Senate vote on national legislation. For another, policies in one state affect what happens in others. Guns stolen in Pennsylvania are used in crimes in New Jersey. Children educated in Texas end up working in California. Voter suppression in Florida affects the composition not only of its State Legislature but also of its legislative delegates in Washington and could determine who wins the White House. We are one nation; if we're to aim at liberty and justice for all, we need to do it together.

I am a transgender man who is currently in medical school and at the point in my training when I am seeing patients day to day. I am also at the point in my physical transition where no one would assume, or even reasonably guess, that I am trans.

If a patient of mine expresses their discomfort with trans people or a belief that trans people are mentally unstable, should I attempt to remove myself from that patient's care if at all possible? Should I inform the patient that I am trans and give them the option of choosing another doctor? (On the latter, I would lean toward not doing so, because I feel I have a right to my privacy and because my safety could easily be compromised in my current work environment.)

I wish this were just a hypothetical, but colleagues have informed me that they have had patients make such comments in the course of asking them routine questions about how they would like to be addressed or while taking a routine sexual history. I have myself come close to the situation they describe a few times, particularly with adolescents with whom our practice is to ask for their gender identity when taking their social history.

This dilemma also raises questions for my future as a provider when I may find myself in a situation where I can't reasonably extricate myself from the patient's care without impairing the health care they receive. Do I then have an obligation to reveal that I am trans?

Name Withheld

The details of your religious or ethnic identity might make some of your patients uncomfortable but are of no relevance to your ability to serve them. The same goes for the details of your gender identity. You have no duty to tell them. They have no right to ask. Transphobia isn't a nut allergy — your being transgender isn't a hidden danger that vulnerable people need to be warned about. If patients somehow learn that you're transgender, and react with prejudice, they are free to cease coming to you for help. But you shouldn't take the initiative when it comes to indulging irrational and regrettable preferences.

There are also circumstances in which doctors effectively fire patients they find intolerable — a different kind of allergy to nuts — and that's acceptable when the patient can find care elsewhere. It's common enough for physicians (members of a profession that is something like 44 percent nonwhite) to encounter vile remarks with respect to their color, accent, presumed ancestry and the like. Misogyny is hardly a rare condition, either. In institutional settings, clinicians mostly try to absorb the blows. Where possible, though, hospitals and clinics should try to accommodate staff members who want

Bonus Advice From Judge John Hodgman

Riley writes: My boyfriend and I have a dispute about the double-decker sandwich. He argues that the word "deck" is nautical and refers to the flat, floorlike bread. So a double-decker is bread, filling, bread, filling, with no third bread-deck on top. I argue a double-decker is bread, filling, bread, filling, bread.

———

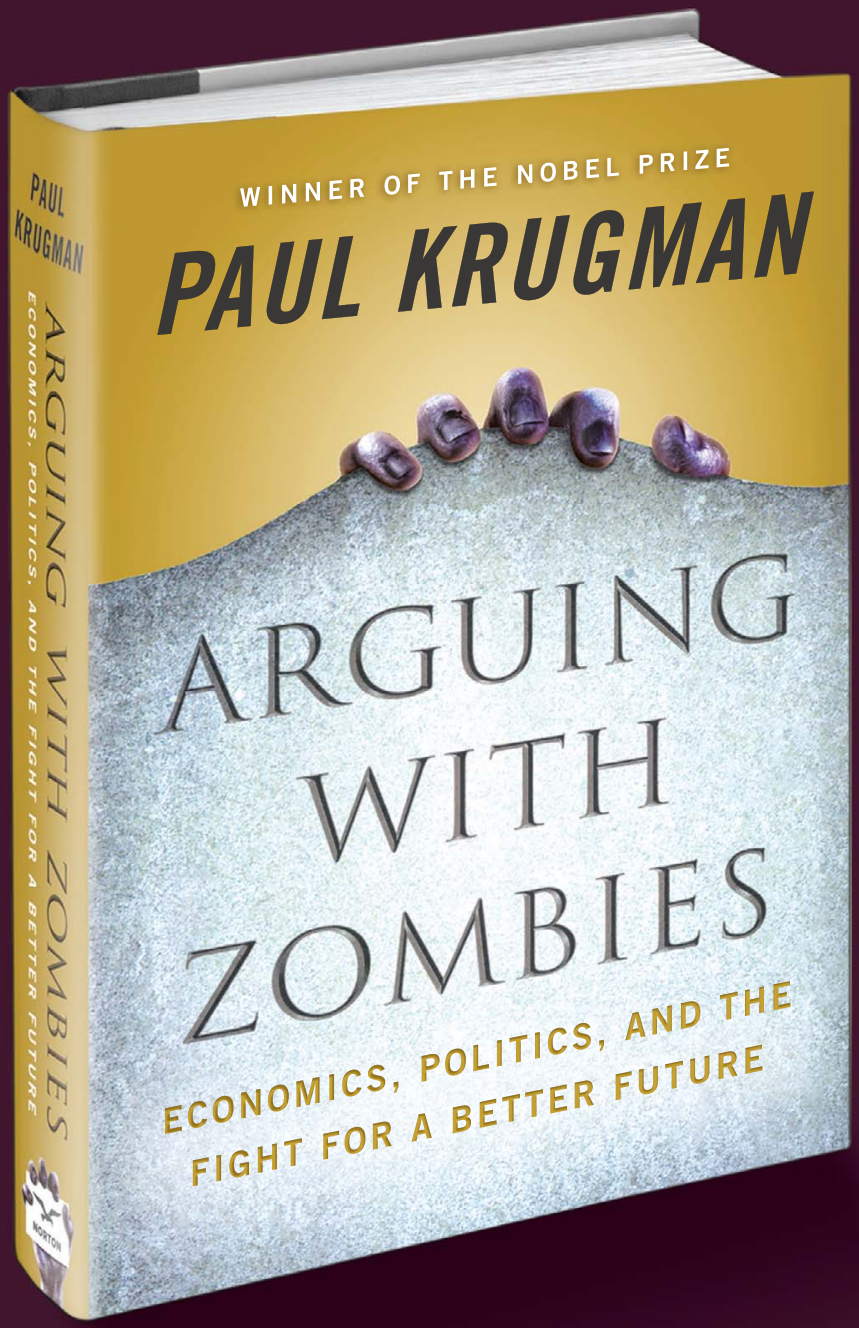
It has been years since I offered a ruling on sandwich-ness. As you know, a hot dog isn't one, and none of your angry letters or FedExes of poisonous vipers will change that fact. Same goes here. I get your boyfriend's logic. But no one ordering a club sandwich would expect a regular sandwich topped with a chef's salad. But take heart, boyfriend! You invented the open-faced double-decker and can now open a fast-casual restaurant called Sundeckers that will provide you lots of local press and then will probably close. But it will be a fun three months.

To submit a query: Send an email to ethicist@nytimes.com; or send mail to The Ethicist, The New York Times Magazine, 620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018. (Include a daytime phone number.)

Illustration by Louise Zergaeng Pomeroy

Illustration by Tomi Um

NEW FROM THE NOBEL PRIZE–WINNING ECONOMIST


PAUL KRUGMAN
ARGUING WITH ZOMBIES
ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND THE FIGHT FOR A BETTER FUTURE
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ARGUING WITH ZOMBIES
ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND THE FIGHT FOR A BETTER FUTURE

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relief from abusive patients. We rightly put the welfare of patients first. But the welfare of health care providers matters, too.

I have been a patient at a health center that caters to the L.G.B.T.Q. community for over 30 years. During that time, I have had several physicians assigned to me, and at times that has included licensed practical nurses, or L.P.N.s, as well as transgender caregivers. At one point, it became obvious to me that my doctor of many years, a woman, had made the decision to transition and was choosing to be addressed by the pronoun "he." The same physician then requested that I find a new caregiver because he was going to pursue research.

I was then assigned to a wonderful L.P.N. who, after years of delivering excellent care, chose to leave her job for personal reasons, which then left me without a care provider. I was then assigned other doctors that included several transgender members of the staff.

I believe the choice of a physician is an extremely personal and important issue for anyone. My question is this: Do I as a patient have the right to request that I not be assigned for personal reasons to any one doctor or caregiver? Also is a clinic or hospital legally obligated to provide the full background of any of their physicians to perspective patients?

I am a gay male in a very happy biracial marriage. I am neither a racist nor do I discriminate against any one group. I do, however, feel I have the right to make my own decision about who my physician is.

Name Withheld, Brooklyn

If you want consistency in care and your health center can't offer that, you should look for another. And you do, in principle, have the right to refuse care from a provider. But why are you interested in getting a provider's "full background"? Have you decided that you don't want to be treated by a trans person? You say you don't discriminate against any group; but that would indeed be discriminatory. What would you say about someone who categorically refused care from gay or black doctors? Having a right to do something doesn't make it the right thing to do.

And no, the clinic doesn't have a duty to provide you with information about the people who work there, beyond facts that

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are relevant to their expertise. As I've said, gender identity — like sexuality, religion, race, ethnicity, national origin, political affiliation and a whole lot else — isn't one of those facts.

My ex-husband's new fiancée recently contacted me, insisting that I give up my last name. She and I just happen to share a first name, which is unsurprising. It's a name that is as common as Hannah or Elizabeth. I think she wants the name to herself, which is understandable, but I still don't want to change it. It has been my name for nearly 20 years, which is almost half my life and my entire adult life.

My reasons are not personal but professional: I married my husband in my early 20s, while in grad school (my diploma is in my married name) and so are all my major publications. We divorced amicably some time ago, and I never bothered to change my name; it just seemed easier to keep my married name. Since then, my career has really taken off, and I'm fairly well known in my field.

My ex's fiancée thinks I'm "sick and stuck in the past" and that I should be "embarrassed to not let things go." That isn't the case at all. It's true that my ex and I talk rarely; we are polite when we do see each other. Though my ex-husband is indifferent about the name change, he won't get his wife to back off.

Is it terrible and unethical to keep it? Again my first name is generic and his last name is generic — think Johnson or Smith. And a Google and social media search yields hundreds of people with the same name. I don't think it's a big deal; she is furious, and I'm worried her anger could escalate to harassment.

Is it wrong to stand my ground? Is it unethical to disregard her and keep a name?

I can't reach out to friends as many of them are mutual or near mutual, and I don't want things to get messy or embarrassing for anyone.

Name Withheld

Having a right to do something doesn't make it the right thing to do.

The late scholar and poet John Hollander delighted in noting that the word "preposterous" had the literal meaning of "before-afterly." This woman's demand is, in the fullest sense, a preposterous one. She has things backward. You're the one who had the name first, and you're the one who has built a professional career under that name. If this latecomer is worried about distinguishing herself from you, she can hyphenate her existing surname with your ex-husband's or keep it as it is.

I would ask her to stop communicating with you about this. What's embarrassing here is her behavior, not yours. May I add that the tone of her communications suggests that her problem isn't with your name but with the fact that her future husband was once married to you? It would seem to be the fiancée who is "stuck in the past." ◆

Kwame Anthony Appiah *teaches philosophy at N.Y.U. His books include "Cosmopolitanism," "The Honor Code" and "The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity."*

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Gyms

By Christian Wiman

Gyms can be an antidote to despair.

I've never been in a gym I didn't like. Oh, there was the one in Paris where the machines were so close together you could taste your neighbor's *tartiflette*, and there was the stale room in far South Texas where, near as I could tell, I was the only member and worked out under the appraising gaze of a hard-bitten woman who couldn't keep herself from wondering how a man (she made the word include a question mark) had so much time for exercise. But even these were antidotes to despair.

It used to be that artists were allergic to exercise and relieved themselves with absinthe and orgies. Now there are spin classes. Not that I've ever attended a spin class, nor any other kind of group exercise either. A good gym, like a good bar, fuses two things: oblivion and anonymity. Of course there are the ritual greetings and glances and such, but these should be minimal and strictly proscribed. The stack of towels should be so crisp and white that it expunges all thought of other users. You should be able to run on a treadmill until your mind is entirely erased.

Of course these are illusions. Exercise, like booze, can stave off reality for only so long. But illusions are as essential to the good gym as they are to a democracy, and equally precarious. During the presidential race in 2016, one of my fellow gymgoers asked what I thought of Donald Trump, and I immediately tore a spiritual tendon. What I love about gyms is their predictability, their moral clarity. Do this right, and you are rewarded. Do

Photograph by Devin Yalkin

it wrong, and you are punished. *Trump? Here?* It was like discovering a slug in my oatmeal.

The gym I now belong to has codified this clarity. It describes itself as a "Judgement Free Zone," and there are not only signs everywhere dissuading boorishness but also an actual "Lunk Alarm" that goes off like an air-raid siren if the level of testosterone rises too high. I've heard it only once, and the poor Samson who set it off (by dropping his weights with a roar) seemed close to tears when he realized why all eyes were on him. (I have no idea who sets it off, probably God.)

Every gym has its own elaborate taxonomy, and there was a time when this fascinated and enlivened me. The queens and the drones, the whippets and the peacocks. Nothing like decline to erode one's belief in distinctions. It's no wonder I've ended up in a gym that's mostly a lumpen mass of humanity, a gym that does not simply tolerate debacle and decrepitude but actively celebrates it. We are encouraged to enjoy a free piece of candy as we leave, and once a month a large table is piled high with bagels and pizza.

For a brief time, though, a god dwelt among us. Tall, provocatively bald (you suspected a mane, I mean), chiseled as a cliff, he performed only two exercises. The first involved a pull-up bar and is beyond my powers of description. He alternated this with standing leaps onto an adjustable platform. That is to say, one minute he stood with an air of intense concentration, and then, with just a ripple in his skin like a breeze passing over still water, he materialized some five feet higher in the air. Without a wobble. I've never seen anything like it, and judging from the way he disrupted others, no one else had, either. How I loved watching him; he made a whole different relation to exercise — and, somehow, to life — seem possible. And how glad I was when he was gone, for the same reason. Predictability, anonymity, oblivion — again, these are the elements of a good gym. No epiphanies, please.

Which brings me face to face, as it were, with my final point: mirrors. These are, of course, ubiquitous in gyms, and for years I used them as everyone does, pretending to check out my form while checking out other unattainable things. Only lately have I realized the true focus and genius of this décor choice — as well as how much money it has saved me. "If a man stands before a mirror," the novelist Flann O'Brien writes, "and sees in it his reflections, what he sees is not a true reproduction of himself but a picture of himself when he was a younger man." This is, in my experience, correct. (And I suspect the specificity of the gender is damningly accurate.) But of late, the self that has been ghosting the glass in front of me is not a man with pecs and purpose, nor even a man with, say, a bit of hair and decent knees.

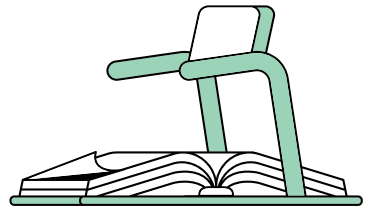
He's not a man at all, in fact, but a little boy of 10, back in 1976 when my daily exercise regimen began. I am certain of the date because "Rocky" came out that year, and one morning I downed (like Rocky) and later upped (unlike Rocky) a tall glass full of raw eggs as part of my "training." I have forgotten the house we lived in at the time, can't recall a meal or a holiday or even one word we said. Yet I remember every scent and sight of the predawn runs I began taking around the neighborhood, and the exact heft of my first plastic-coated dumbbells. A therapist would make much of this, no doubt, but obviously I don't need a therapist. I have a gym. ◆

A good gym, like a good bar, fuses two things: oblivion and anonymity.

Christian Wiman *is the author, editor or translator of 12 books of poetry and prose, including "Survival Is a Style," a poetry collection published last month by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.*

Tip By Malia Wollan

How to Read Faster



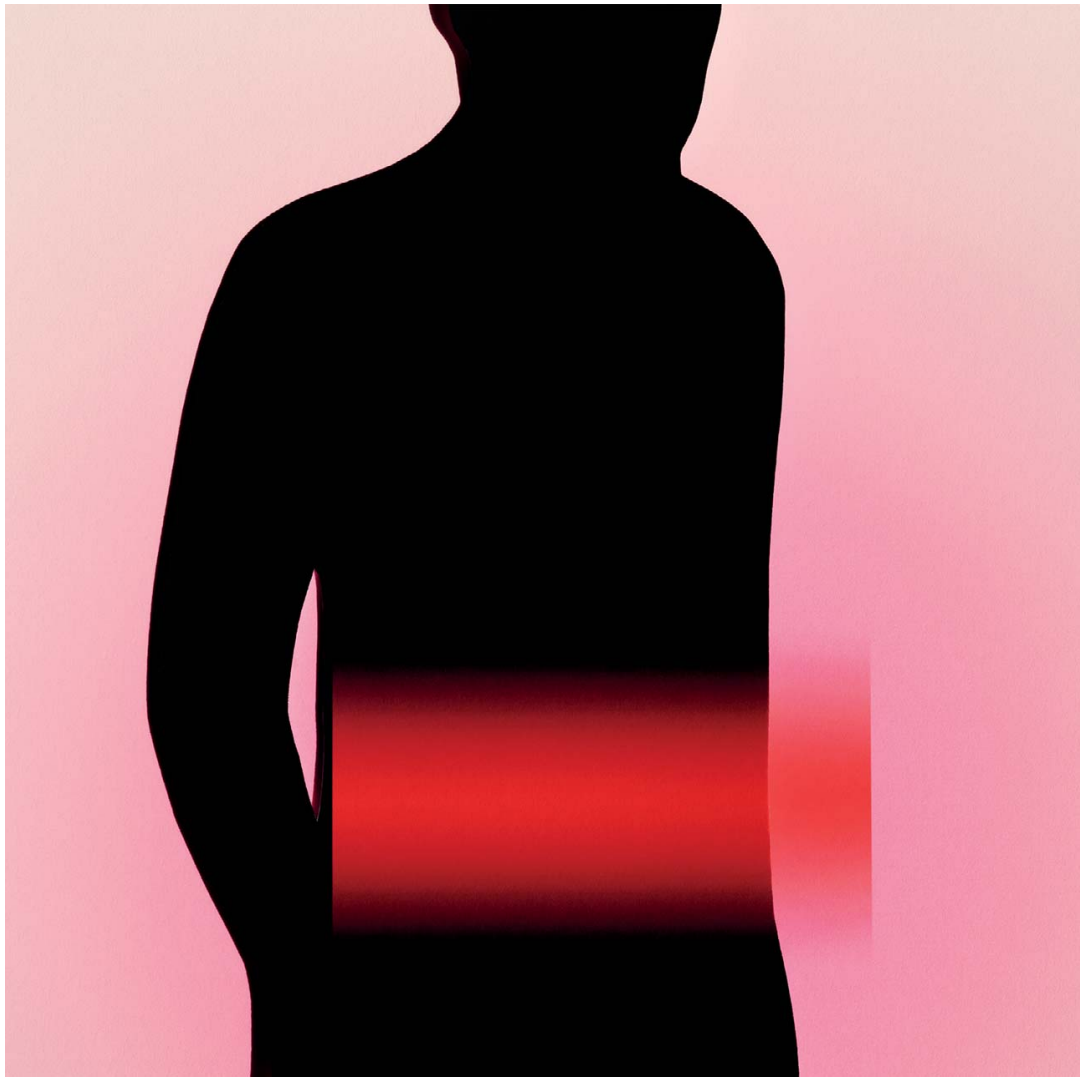
"There are no shortcuts," says Elizabeth Schotter, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of South Florida, where she runs the Eye Movements and Cognition Lab. College-educated adults usually read between 200 and 400 words per minute (a comfortable listening rate is around 150 words per minute). The speediest speed readers claim as many as 30,000 words per minute, at which point research would suggest a significant loss of comprehension. It might be fine to skim through a user manual for an office printer, but don't skim "Anna Karenina" and expect to understand it. "In this modern age, we always want to do everything faster," says Schotter, whose lab uses high-speed video to analyze readers' eyes as they dart across text. America's speed-reading obsession confounds Schotter; on average, people read twice as fast as they can comfortably listen. Reading is visually and cognitively complicated; it's OK to reread a line because it's confusing or, better yet, to linger on a phrase so beautiful that it makes you want to close your eyes.

You tend to read faster by reading more. One of the biggest influences on your pace is what psycholinguists call the word-frequency effect; the more times you've encountered a word, the faster you'll recognize it. Your eyes will fixate longer on less-familiar words, making you more likely to stall on "abode," for example, than the more common "house." Skilled readers start to predict words and meaning even in their blurry peripheral vision, which allows them to skip more words, especially short ones. Readers skip the word "the," for example, around 50 percent of the time. "If you spend all your time reading 'Harry Potter,' you're going to get really good at reading 'Harry Potter,' " says Schotter, who suggests taking in a wide variety of texts to expand your vocabulary.

Sometimes you'll find yourself needing to reread a word, a sentence or even a paragraph to understand its meaning. Researchers call these regressions, and faster readers generally make fewer of them than slower readers do. Some writing is harder to decode and predict and is more likely to trigger regressions. Among the hardest are what psycholinguists call garden-path sentences, like "The cotton clothes are made up of grows in Mississippi." If speed is your aim, the clearer the prose, the faster you'll read. "Part of the burden," Schotter says, "is on the writer." ◆

Illustration by Radio

After a stem-cell transplant, a man's immune system seems to go out of whack. The usual treatment doesn't work. Why?



"Have you read this?" the 61-year-old man asked his newest doctor, Madan Jagasia, as they sat in an exam room in the cancer center at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. The book, titled "Dying Well," prompted a concerned look from the oncologist. You know we're not there yet, he said he told the patient.

Jagasia had only recently taken over the patient's care, but he knew the man had been through an awful 14 months. Just a few weeks before Christmas in 2016, the athletic and active lawyer discovered he had an aggressive leukemia. The patient first went through months of the brutal chemotherapy that makes up the first-line treatment, followed by a stem-cell transplant — in which progenitor blood cells from a donor are transfused into circulation to replace the patient's diseased cells.

The treatment had been tough, but as he approached the next Christmas, the patient was finally feeling more like himself. He was still on immune-suppressing medications to keep his new immune system in check as it settled into his body. He had started a new job — one that would let him work at the slower pace he now needed. And he was getting his tennis game back into shape. Then, on Christmas Day, after the joyful orgy of presents with children and grandchildren and their traditional huge holiday breakfast, he started to feel unwell. He excused himself and hurried to the bathroom. It seemed that everything he'd ever consumed came out. The cramps twisted his insides in excruciating waves that left him breathless.

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Immune System Gone Wrong

When the paroxysms finally stopped, the man felt exhausted — as if all his energy had left with the contents of his digestive system. He made it to his bed and wasn't strong enough to get up again for hours. That evening he felt better, and a few days later, when it was time to go back to work, he thought he was ready.

But in a couple of days, he again had devastating diarrhea, which left him too weak to leave his house. Those episodes became a near daily occurrence. When he reported his symptoms to an oncologist on his cancer-treatment team, the doctor made the diagnosis of graft-versus-host disease (G.V.H.D.). That is, his transplanted immune system was

Photo illustrations by Ina Jang

attacking his body as if it were a foreign invader. The patient had a version of this weeks after his stem-cell transplant, when he developed a lumpy red rash: G.V.H.D. of the skin. His doctors upped the immune-suppressing medicines and started something called photopheresis, in which blood is routed out of the body, through a type of light that kills off the misdirected white cells, then back into circulation. The rash slowly faded.

G.V.H.D. was common, he was told back then. More than half of those who have the kind of stem-cell transplant he had will get it in some form. Once the rash disappeared, his doctors stopped the photopheresis and started lowering the dose of his immune-suppressing medications. This had to be done slowly so that the new cells and the old body had more time to get used to each other. And he'd done well, until that Christmas Day.

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Losing Weight

The form of G.V.H.D. he now had, located in his lower gastrointestinal tract, was far more serious than the type he had before, the oncologist told him. The doctor immediately increased the immune-suppressing medications. Usually that step provides relief within days. When it didn't, additional medications were added. When that didn't help, another medicine was added and titrated up.

Are you sure I have G.V.H.D.? he asked the oncologist. Over the first couple of weeks, he lost more than 10 pounds. The doctor ordered a biopsy of the lower GI tract, which was suggestive of mild G.V.H.D. but not definitive. That wasn't uncommon with this disease. G.V.H.D. can elude testing; a diagnosis is usually made based on the patient's story. He already had G.V.H.D. once, and the diarrhea started as he was being weaned from the immune-suppressing drugs. That clinical picture, even without the biopsy confirmation, made the G.V.H.D. diagnosis overwhelmingly likely.

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The Right Treatment?

And yet, why wasn't the treatment working? The oncologist had no answer. After a few more weeks, the patient despaired. Am I dying? he asked the doctor, hoping to be reassured. But the doctor hesitantly acknowledged that he might be. The patient lost all confidence in him and told him so. Jagasia, the head of the cancer center, stepped in to oversee his care.

Jagasia was concerned that although G.V.H.D. was the most likely diagnosis, it might not be the right one. The patient had already been tested for the usual infections seen in immune-suppressed patients. So he looked for other possible causes of the patient's diarrhea. He didn't find any. The patient lost another 15 pounds. When he looked in the mirror, he hardly recognized himself. Jagasia arranged for the patient to start getting intravenous nutrition and began tapering one immune-suppressing medication in order to start another.

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His Son Weighs In

The patient's son was in medical school in another part of the state and called home frequently. When his father finally told him how sick he was, his son got scared. His father was a minimizer. If he was saying this, things must be bad.

When he got off the phone, the young man immediately turned to the internet. He typed in "gastroenteritis after … stem-cell transplant." The first results that came up referred to a paper in a medical journal, Clinical Infectious Diseases, published nearly a decade earlier that identified an unexpected culprit: norovirus.

Lisa Sanders, M.D., *is a contributing writer for the magazine. Her latest book is "Diagnosis: Solving the Most Baffling Medical Mysteries." If you have a solved case to share with Dr. Sanders, write her at Lisa.Sandersmd@gmail.com.*

Norovirus is one of the most common causes of gastroenteritis in the world. In the United States, it's linked to an estimated 21 million cases of nausea and vomiting every year. Diarrhea can be present but is not typically as severe as other symptoms. In a normal host, the infection resolves on its own after 48 to 72 hours, thanks to the hard work of the immune system. Even so, norovirus was not a common cause of diarrhea in those who are immunosuppressed. But in the medical-journal paper, the first of its kind, 12 patients who had a stem-cell transplant and developed a persistent diarrheal illness were found to have norovirus. And of those 12, 11 were initially thought to have G.V.H.D. In most of those cases, it was only after the immune-suppressing medications were reduced that the patient's own defenses could come to the rescue and vanquish the virus.

The son immediately sent the paper to his father. Had he been tested for norovirus? he asked. The patient wasn't sure. He forwarded the journal article to Jagasia and asked if he'd had this test. He hadn't. Jagasia was 99 percent certain that this was a wild-goose chase. He'd never seen norovirus in patients with compromised immune systems. Still, testing was easy.

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Surprise Results

When the test came back positive, Jagasia was stunned. He repeated the test. Positive again. He immediately started to taper the immune-suppressing medications. As the doses came down, the diarrhea slowed, and after a few weeks, it stopped completely. With the help of the IV nutrition, and a slowly improving appetite, the patient began to gain back the weight he lost. From the patient's point of view, his son saved his life.

The patient had a good spring and summer. But in the fall of 2018, tests showed that his leukemia had returned. Despite aggressive treatment and intermittent improvement, the disease progressed. When I spoke with him in late February, he was in hospice. He had two goals. He wanted to make it to his daughter's wedding in late March, and he wanted me to tell the story of how his son saved his life and gave him almost two more years with his family. He was so proud of his children.

Sadly, he didn't make it to either goal. The patient died earlier this month. ◆

What if Tuna Casserole Were Delicious? Look to Japan for inspiration, then crank open a can.

Photograph by Jenny Huang

Food stylist: Maggie Ruggiero. Prop stylist: Beatrice Chastka.

'All you have to do is open the can and slice open a bag of saltines.'

Canned fish is one of the great delights of this shoulder season, as spring begins its ascent — and maybe particularly when so many of us are cooking with the cans in the back of the pantry, or trying to keep stocks of food in the house. I like the larger ones mixed into mayonnaise and the smaller ones dabbed with hot sauce. I like albacore crumbled into roux and heated with elbow macaroni and cheese — tuna wiggle, some people call it, or tuna casserole. I like sardines shingled over pilot crackers or accompanying a sleeve of stoned wheat thins, with an apple and a wedge of cheese. I like canned salmon flaked onto a salad, with a tangy vinaigrette. I like to eat these things outside, in the brisk bright air of early spring as much as in the warmth of summer, at a table on a porch or on a blanket in the sand, and especially now, as I emerge blinking from the Northeastern winter blues, ready for a new season.

I'm not alone. Even some of those who have access to the finest ingredients, chefs for whom the distance between ocean and table is smaller than average, men and women known for their devotion to the fresh and the new — even they love a can of fish. Especially if it's what I'll call a best-available can of fish: sustainably caught, packed in good oil.

"It's not bunker food," the chef Erin French told me. "It's sexy picnic food." French owns and operates the Lost Kitchen, in Freedom, Maine, where the menu arises from what the farmers nearby have grown and what the boats have brought to shore in Portland, down the coast. You don't run into a lot of tuna wiggle there. "But a good, tender tinned fish, soaked in clean and fruity olive oil," French asked rhetorically, "on a bit of crusty bread slathered with butter?" That she endorsed, calling it "the purest of joy." I tried that preparation, just to see, with best-available sardines and a baguette swiped with Irish butter. It is in fact joyful.

So is the version I learned from Carri Thurman, one of the chefs and owners of Two Sisters Bakery in Homer, Alaska. (On the menu: sunflower oat bread, vegan pitas and multigrain focaccia with roasted veggies.) Thurman doesn't keep tuna in her larder, or sardines, not after 35 years in a city devoted to the harvest of halibut and salmon. But like a lot of her neighbors in Homer, she puts up a lot of salmon. "All you have to do is open the can and slice open a bag of saltines," Thurman said. Add cream cheese, sweet pickles, chives if you can find them. "It's the perfect on-the-go potluck plate," she said. That's true, I've discovered, even with canned salmon bought at a grocery store in the lower 48.

Steven Satterfield, the vegetable shaman, co-owner and executive chef at Miller Union in Atlanta, taught me yet another approach: crumbled canned tuna served over a salad of baby kale and chicory mixed with a shallot vinaigrette, along with shaved radishes, sliced fennel and a handful of olives. Satterfield called it a late-winter salade niçoise, and who am I to disagree? It's awesome.

But it was Bart van Olphen, a YouTube fish fanatic, entrepreneur and chef whose "The Tinned Fish Cookbook" will be published this spring, who gave me my favorite recipe of the new season: an udon noodle salad with canned tuna in oil, dressed in a sweet-salty vinaigrette of soy, sesame oil, mirin and rice vinegar. Van Olphen calls this dressing *wafu*, which translates roughly as Japanese-style. I think of the dish as Japanese tuna wiggle. It is as good served cold as hot.

I did make some adjustments to van Olphen's instructions. To the dressing, for instance, I added a little sweet miso, as much for the texture it added as for its taste. And I increased the amount of *wakame*, a remarkably flavored seaweed, just because it's so delicious and I wanted to make a point: It's not really a garnish but an ingredient, like the peas in a tuna casserole, not the chopped parsley on top.

Which is not to say this salad isn't garnished. But instead of using a spray of van Olphen's plain toasted sesame seeds, I substituted a like-size amount of furikake, the Japanese seasoning blend that has a base of sesame seeds and then some mixture of dried bonito, hot peppers, chopped seaweed, sugar, salt and, sometimes, monosodium glutamate. My children call *furikake* "shake" and use it to anoint their afternoon rice snacks, where it adds a hit of pungent umami to their meal. I shower my Japanese tuna wiggle with it for similar reasons. The result tastes to me of promise, of what's to come.

Japanese-Style Tuna Noodle Salad

Time: 30 minutes

For the salad:

- ¼ cup cut dried *wakame* seaweed
- 8 ounces dried udon noodles
- 1-2 tablespoons *furikake* or sesame seeds
- 10-12 ounces canned tuna in oil, drained
- 2 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced

For the dressing:

- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon mirin
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sweet miso

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high, and set the *wakame* in a small bowl. Once the water comes to a boil, ladle or pour enough over the *wakame* to cover it by 2 inches; let the *wakame* soak for 10 minutes. Transfer the *wakame* to a colander to drain and cool; set aside.

2. While the *wakame* soaks, cook the noodles according to the package instructions.

3. Meanwhile, prepare the dressing: In a measuring cup or bowl, whisk to combine the sesame oil, canola oil, rice wine vinegar, mirin, soy sauce and miso; set aside.

4. In a small skillet, lightly toast the sesame seeds, if using, over medium-low heat until fragrant; set aside.

5. Drain the cooked noodles in the colander, then transfer to a wide, shallow serving bowl. Add the *wakame* and about ¾ of the dressing, and toss to coat. Divide the noodles among 4 bowls. Top each portion with tuna, drizzle with the remaining dressing, then sprinkle with the scallions and *furikake* or sesame seeds. Serve hot, cold or anywhere in between.

Yield: 4 servings.

Adapted from the "The Tinned Fish Cookbook," by Bart van Olphen. ◆

SISTER ACT

The social club the Wing has billed itself as a modern women's utopia. Whom is it really for?
By Amanda Hess Photo illustration by Margeaux Walter Page 22

THE

idea was born in a Starbucks bathroom. Audrey Gelman, then a 28-year-old public-relations savant and New York personality, was tired of dashing between meetings in New York and Washington, charging her phone in hotel lobbies and freshening up in the public restrooms of fast-casual chains. She envisioned a kind of feminine pit stop she would call Refresh — a private club where women could blow their hair out and check their email in comfort and peace.

But in time, Gelman's aspirations widened. She realized, she told The New York Observer in 2016, that carving out space for women was a "subtly radical" idea. Gelman partnered with Lauren Kassan, a 28-year-old director of business development at the fitness start-up ClassPass. They began plotting the club's first location: a bright penthouse in New York's Flatiron district along a historic stretch known as the Ladies' Mile, where, in the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century, upscale women could be seen shopping unchaperoned. They enlisted the historian Alexis Coe to research early American women's clubs and traced a line between those efforts and their own. When the club opened its doors in October 2016 — under a new name, the Wing — they styled it as "a place for women on their way." In its final form, Gelman said on the Recode podcast last year, the Wing is intended as a "women's utopia."

Stepping into a Wing location feels a little like being sealed inside a pop-feminist Biodome. It is pitched as a social experiment: what the world would look like if it were designed by and for women, or at least millennial women with meaningful employment and a cultivated Instagram aesthetic. The Wing looks beautiful and expensive, with curvy pink interiors that recall the womb. The thermostat hovers around 72 degrees, to satisfy women's higher temperature needs. A color-coded library features books by female authors only. There are well-appointed pump rooms, as well as private phone booths named after Lisa Simpson, Anita Hill and Lady Macbeth. There is an in-house cafe, the Perch, serving wines sourced from female vintners, and an in-house babysitting annex, the Little Wing, where members' children may be looked after. The vibe is a fusion of sisterly inclusion and exclusive luxury: Private memberships run up to $3,000 per year, and the wait-list is 9,000 names long.

But the Wing's real draw is the women who gather within. Wing members — there are now around 12,000 — call themselves "Wing women" or "sistren" or "Winglets." Among them are actress and model Hari Nef; the Women's March co-founder Linda Sarsour; social media influencers; C.E.O.s; best-selling authors. (Multiple employees of The New York Times, including of this magazine, are Wing members.) When Gelman sent an email inviting an intimate crew of women to join the Wing as "founding members" in summer 2016, she announced a new echelon of New York elite. The club's grand opening was styled as a slumber party, where women who made the cut wore luxe white pajamas, sampled face masks and staged a pillow fight. Gelman is the Wing's chief executive but also the avatar of its ideal member: a meticulously fashionable, intensely driven woman who has managed to make her mark in the world in a way that strives to uplift other women at the same time.

The Wing has labeled itself a coven, not a sorority, and Winglets have found at the Wing business associates, friends, even wives: Two members who met at the Flatiron location later became engaged on its roof. Women have written books and launched companies at the Wing. The club's sorbet-tinged interiors have become a coveted backdrop for female-focused public-relations efforts: The Wing is where Hillary Clinton was greeted like the victor in her post-campaign press tour, and where Jennifer Lopez dropped the news of her new skin-care line.

In the three and a half years since the company's inception, Wing locations have multiplied across New York and popped up in Boston, Chicago, London, West Hollywood, San Francisco and Georgetown. New clubs are set to open in Toronto and Seattle this year; Vogue ran a feature on Gelman and Kassan scouting spaces in Paris. The Wing's ascent is fueled by more than $100 million in funding from venture capitalists and stakeholders including Mindy Kaling, Valerie Jarrett and Megan Rapinoe.

The very fact of the Wing's existence has been heralded — by Teen Vogue, by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and especially by the Wing itself — as a beacon, a pioneering capitalist model that could help improve the station of women everywhere. When Gelman appeared on the cover of Inc.'s "Female Founders 100" issue last year, she was the first visibly pregnant C.E.O. to front a business magazine. Last year, the company took out an ad in The New York Times's sports section advocating for members of the U.S. women's soccer team, who had sued the sport's governing body claiming gender discrimination. Styled like a suffragist broadsheet, it read: "Equal pay isn't a game." In 2018, the Wing introduced a scholarship program that extended free memberships to people working for the "advancement of women and girls," gave health benefits to the clubs' hourly workers and promised "long-term, well-paying job opportunities" within the organization. Forty percent of its executives are now women of color. As Gelman told Fast Company, "We want our mission to not only be expressed through our brand but through our internal policies."

The Wing 'makes feminism a cool club that you can join as opposed to a social necessity,' one former employee says.

The promise of a feminist workplace has drawn hundreds of bright and ambitious women to seek employment at the Wing, eager to work in beautiful spaces and in the company of women. "It was a pink penthouse in the sky," says Raichelle Carter, a chef who worked in the Flatiron outpost of the Perch last year, recalling her first impression of the place. "Butterflies, rainbows, everybody working in unison." Only later did she and many of her colleagues come to think that the Wing's utopia was built to empower a very particular kind of woman; that it was in fact their job to construct the shimmering mirage of feminism for such women; and that it was routine for women like them to be undermined in the company's pursuit of feminist P.R. It was "a total facade," Carter says. "It's just like any other company that wants to make their money."

Luxury and feminism have long been intertwined. Virginia Woolf's 1929 book "A Room of One's Own" — a Wing philosophical touchstone — didn't argue for just any old room. Woolf wanted women to have access to "deep armchairs," "pleasant carpets" and opulently catered luncheons presented by servants on silver trays, to bask in the "urbanity, the geniality, the dignity which are the offspring of luxury and privacy and space." She imbued amenities with the capacity to ease sexist affronts. With the spoils of wealth on her side, she wrote, "I need not hate any man; he cannot hurt me." Generations later, the second-wave feminist Ellen Willis came at the argument from a new perspective, mounting a practical defense of female materialism. "The profusion of commodities is a genuine and powerful compensation for oppression," Willis wrote. "It is a bribe, but like all bribes it offers concrete benefits." She added, "For women, buying and wearing clothes and beauty aids is not so much consumption as work."

If in the 1960s a segment of the feminist movement was concerned with advancing women in the work force, that impulse has now been so thoroughly individualized that a woman's career can be cast as a kind of feminist statement in and of itself. In this mode, consumer luxuries take

Audrey Gelman, co-founder and chief executive of the Wing, in 2017.

on a feminist valence too, signifying power and the mechanism for accruing more. The Wing's merchandise — key chains that read "girls doing whatever the [expletive] they want," tote bags that say "TAKING UP SPACE," socks that read "PAY ME" — invite members and nonmembers alike to telegraph that feminized mode of ambition, coyly aestheticizing the kind of entitlement that comes so easily to many men.

At the very least, the stuff makes you feel good. The Perch's "Virgin Woolf" mocktail is refreshing; the water pressure from the Wing shower head is reassuringly firm. At the Wing, comfort itself can represent a kind of progress. As Gelman once put it on Instagram: "Women go through their lives taking care of everyone & everything, and there is deep relief in entering any tangible space where someone is finally taking care of you."

The union between feminism and marketing is the consummation of a long relationship. In the 1970s, Ms. Magazine influenced corporations to scrap their sexist ads in favor of feminist-themed pitches, but today it is the branders themselves who are hailed as feminist icons. In Gelman, feminism has one of New York's most charming and relentless flacks on its side. When the socialist It Girls of the "Red Scare" podcast ribbed the Wing for its bourgeois sensibility, Gelman worked to change their minds, making herself a T-shirt that said "Frenemy of the Pod," showing up at a live taping and posing next to one of the hosts making the universal sign for cunnilingus. Gelman is not just the face of her own company but also a kind of executive influencer whose currency as a female C.E.O. is used to brush other products with a touch of feminism. In 2017 she appeared in a spot for Chanel fine jewelry in which she flexes her arms and advises, "Be empowered"; last year she starred in an ad for Air France in which she reclines in a roomy business-class seat. "I'm a C.E.O.," she informs the "guys" who dominate the class. "Hey, I belong here, too."

Though the Wing's motto is "empowering women through community," it also builds marketing relationships, plugging companies like American Express, Land Rover and Amazon Prime into its ready-made feminist branding apparatus. These companies are eager to seed the Wing with their swag and minister to well-connected members at sponsored events, images of which percolate across Instagram like modern infomercials. The place is an influence machine: Wing members effectively pay to advertise products to other women in front of the club's feminine backdrops, and along the way, burnish their own brand power too.

The Wing was conceived amid great expectations for the Hillary Clinton presidency, but it was her defeat that sharpened the company's sense of mission. As Trump ascended to the White House, and sexual harassers were unmasked at workplaces across the country, the concept of the women's-only club was elevated from luxury to necessity. Members who joined for a refuge from public bathrooms were now also claiming refuge from the patriarchy. The absence of men and the presence of fine amenities became a salve for the traumas experienced by women as a class. Gelman began to speak about a Wing membership as analogous to political agitation. The news of the day might be dispiriting for women, Gelman told Entrepreneur magazine, "but to see women coming together and fighting back and organizing — whether through the Women's March or in support of organizations like the Wing — that's the silver lining to all of this."

Like the women's clubs, consciousness-raising groups, feminist bookstores and lesbian separatist womyn's lands that came before it, the Wing's organizing structure gestures at radical potential. When women convene together in the absence of men, the argument goes, they can psychically recharge, compare notes on the patriarchy and define new political priorities. In the summer of 2018, Gelman threw the congressional candidate Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez a fund-raiser after her surprise victory in a Democratic primary. On Instagram, the pair could be seen on Gelman's patio in matching button-down shirts and round wire-framed glasses. Later an endorsement from Ocasio-Cortez popped up on the Wing's website: "The Wing isn't just a functional space, it's a real symbol of what's opening in our country. [It's] one of the most potent forces that we've seen emerge in politics this year."

The Wing's feminism thrives on the impression of societal progress projected by its brand. Every Wing offering — its Little Wing babysitting, its inclusive range of hair-care products, its "Motherhood on the Move" partnership with Medela, a company known for its breast pumps — is pitched as a public good. The amenities may be available only to paying members, but they are promoted symbolically to women at large. In fact, the Wing's political offerings are expansive to the point of incoherence. In its in-house magazine, No Man's Land, the Wing featured the whistle-blower and member Chelsea Manning; at its Georgetown space, it celebrated the women of the C.I.A. in partnership with the Showtime series "Homeland."

Women represent both a consumer demographic and a political constituency, and the wires of politics and consumption are easily crossed. At the Wing, progressive politics themselves are recast as one more luxury product — something to be worn rather than enacted. Its programming can feel like a self-affirming simulation of political engagement. After Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court confirmation hearing, the Wing's San Francisco outpost emblazoned Christine Blasey Ford's name onto a conference room; Valerie Jarrett and others stopped for selfies in front of the door, as if compensating for the loss of judicial power with a ticket to a feminist Instagram museum. In February, as the Iowa Caucuses unfolded, the Wing staged its own "caucus" in which members role-played exercising their civic duty. Gelman stumped passionately for Bernie Sanders, but Elizabeth Warren swept fictional "Wing County." It would be the only 2020 contest she would win.

In February 2018, the Wing opened its first Brooklyn location, an expansive space in Dumbo with a sunken velvet conversation pit, Ruth Bader

Photograph by Robyn Twomey/Redux

Ginsburg's face etched into pink wallpaper and a golden welcome note embedded in the floor that read: "YOU HAVE ARRIVED." On many days, perched behind the curved wooden front desk was Vei Darling.

When Darling, who uses the pronoun "they," joined the Wing, they had just come off a couple of service jobs at workplaces dominated by men, and thought a women-only space sounded like the place to be. But when Darling arrived in the sprawling SoHo location for an interview, they were not so sure they fit in. The crowd seemed very white; everybody looked rich. But Darling was assured that they were exactly the kind of person the Wing was looking for: a first-generation Liberian-American with a striking, pasteled online presence who was cultivating their own business as a professional witch incorporating Tarot and astrology. Within months, they were drafted to model shirts that read "THE JOY OF SISTERHOOD" and "EXTREME SELF-CARE" on the Wing's website.

But after working there for a year and a half, Darling came to understand that their true value to the company was different from what they had first imagined. "It was only so that they could exploit my presence and my image for their own purposes," they say, "to make it seem like they were more inclusive than they actually were." In June 2019, when Dumbo employees were paid several days late, Darling wrote an email copied to Gelman and Kassan describing what Darling and their colleagues felt was "a toxic culture" of "passive aggression," "disrespect" and "fear of retribution." Wing employees "don't get paid enough for our immense physical, intellectual and emotional labor," Darling wrote. (A Wing spokeswoman said the company couldn't comment on most specific personnel matters, but in this case said Gelman offered to meet with Darling.)

By the time Darling left, they had come to feel that the Wing's political branding was cynical. "It makes feminism a cool club that you can join as opposed to a social necessity," Darling says. From their perspective, Winglets could assure themselves: "I'm a member of this all-women's social club, so I've paid my dues — literally."

In interviews with 26 current and former Wing employees, people who have worked in Wing headquarters and in spaces across the United States in jobs that range from cooking and cleaning to management, most told a similar story of excitement about their new workplace curdling into anxiety and disgust. (Many — citing fear of losing their jobs, of being sued over breaking the nondisparagement clause in their employment contract or of retribution from the Wing's powerful professional network — agreed to speak only on the condition of anonymity.)

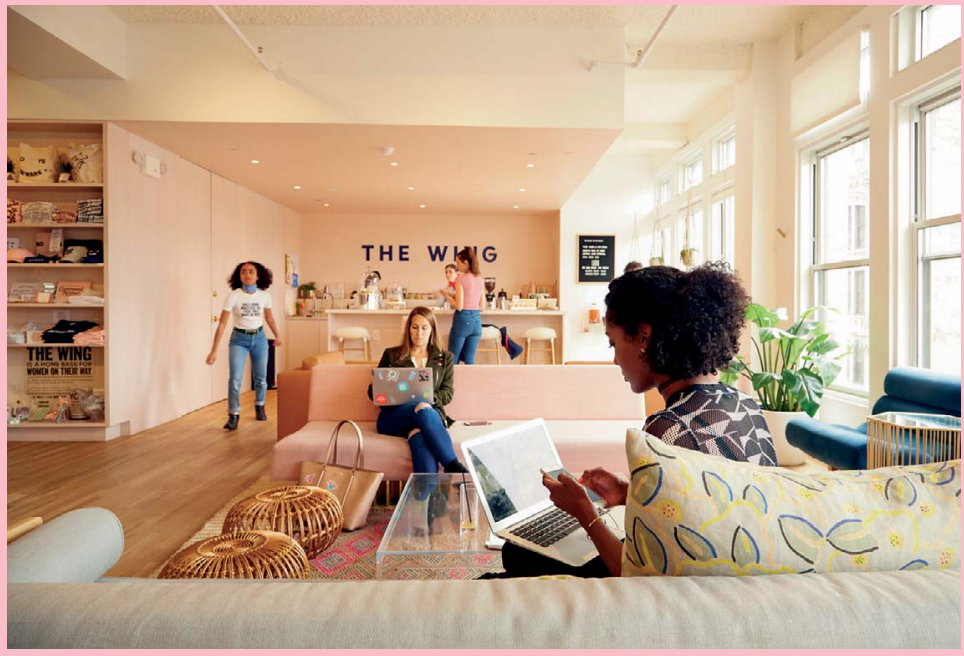
At first, these women say, they were relieved to have landed at a company built by women, one that seemed to leverage their expertise behind the barista counter or in corporate management in service to a larger mission. Most Wing employees I spoke with had ambitions bigger than their starting positions; the job planted them tantalizingly close to their passions. They were granted membership privileges, with access to the beauty rooms and the lending libraries, and they mingled with actors, magazine editors, political operatives, Gelman herself. The pitch to incoming staff members emphasized the grand opportunities afforded by the space. "These are the people that are going to hire you for your next job," A. C. Smallwood, who worked at the front desk in the Flatiron location, remembers being told about the members. "These are the people that are going to invest in your start-up."

But soon they became disillusioned. Some staff members hired to work the front desk or run events saw their job duties inflated to include scrubbing toilets, washing dishes and lint-rolling couches. As the company rapidly expanded and new members flooded into crowded spaces, a chasm opened between members and the staff. While some members had friendly or unremarkable interactions with the employees, others seemed to hold them personally responsible for delivering on the brand's promise of feminist entitlement. "I was the connector, the friend, the therapist, the mother, the sister, the live-in coach," one former employee says. "I was treated like a human kitty-litter box." Another says: "We were 'the help.' " When staff members tried to exercise their membership privileges, on breaks or after their shifts, members would hand them dirty dishes or barge in on them in the phone booth. Some screamed at employees about crowding in the space and cried over insufficient swag. A common member refrain was that it was anti-feminist not to give her whatever perk she desired.

Despite the impression of diversity promoted on the Wing's Instagram feed, employees working events could find themselves to be the only black women in the room. Members and their guests could be casually racist. One eyed a photo board of Wing employees and remarked, "There's a lot of colored girls that work here." Another overheard some local teenage girls, who had been invited to the Wing for an event, speaking in Spanish, and complained that they were ridiculing her. (The member said she herself did not understand the language.) At one community event, planned at the suggestion of a friend of Gelman's, black employees served a crew of redheads as they discussed the societal woes of gingers. According to two employees who were present, the women demanded a total of 18 free bottles of wine and stayed past the club's closing time. When a staff member asked them to leave, one redhead called her a bitch. Luxury products were missing from the beauty room after they left. Employees observed few consequences for this kind of behavior. "It was always members first," Raichelle Carter says.

At the same time, employees found their own promised empowerment elusive. They described tumultuous turnover. Opportunities for growth could be dangled and then dropped without explanation. "I've been made to feel small, insignificant, stupid," one employee says. "This is a place for 'women on their way,' unless you work at the Wing." Maya Sari Ahmed, who worked as a design director in

The Wing space in New York's Flatiron district.



Photograph by Robyn Twomey/Redux

Wing headquarters, says she was chastised by a manager after sharing with her team that she'd had a psychotic episode. She says she was told that she was creating an unstable work environment, even as she worked to produce Wing stickers that read "WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN." (The Wing spokeswoman said the company provides mental health benefits to all its employees.)

Salaried Wing employees often worked punishingly long days without overtime pay, but hourly Wing employees, whose pay currently starts at $16.50 in New York clubs, could have trouble being consistently approved for enough shifts to support themselves. That is "not a living wage, especially not in New York City," Darling wrote in an email to management. While working at the Wing, Darling snagged a free "Ladies Get Paid" tote from a Wing event hosted by a group that fights for equal pay, but, as they wrote in their email, "I have been so broke that I haven't had money to even buy food." Tips from the Perch were distributed among the staff, but Wing members tended to be poor tippers. A version of the Perch menu reassured them that "the Wing provides equitable, living wages to all of our employees, front- and back-of-house alike." (The Wing spokeswoman said that the company has always "maintained employment best practices.")

Through all of this, some of these very same Wing employees could be seen on Instagram, grinning from the Perch or gladly pouring lattes in Wing-logo shirts. "You learn the game very quickly with the Wing," one former employee says. "As long as everything looks Instagram-ready, we're good." An enticing visual presentation — owning clever accessories, wearing a cute outfit, maintaining an attractive side hustle — was seen as a plus. Staff members noticed that Gelman was drawn to such women.

The drive for perfection created "a culture of fear and secrecy," one former employee says. Until recently, Wing values posted in the spaces reminded employees that a requirement of the job was to act in a "utopian" manner. Each club sent a daily report to executives, but employees learned to avoid flagging problems, sensing that the leadership treated every surface flaw as a disaster. During an extended bout of construction on the SoHo space, the ceiling cracked and leaked, and while employees were told to stop alerting higher-ups to the problem, they say they were also expected to make it appear solved. Staff members placed buckets around the space during storms, but if Gelman was heading over with guests, they embarked on a vaudevillian routine of removing the buckets just in time for Gelman's arrival and replacing them before a puddle had formed. "We used to call SoHo 'the Rainforest Cafe,'" says Cass Alcide, a former community manager. Employees were instructed not to clean in front of members, lest they ruin the illusion. At the Wing, outside appearances could be obsessed over while internal feedback was stigmatized or ignored. "It was Gaslighting 101," one employee says.

'You learn the game very quickly with the Wing,' one former employee says. 'As long as everything looks Instagram-ready, we're good.'

This incessant P.R. drive extended to the Wing's internal communications. After the New York City Commission on Human Rights began an investigation into the Wing's gender policy and a Washington man sued over being denied access to the club, the company instituted a policy of allowing men through its doors. But when the leadership announced the change to staff members, they framed the new guidelines as an effort to generously school its community on inclusiveness toward nonbinary and trans members. "It was worded like someone had just skimmed the Wikipedia for Judith Butler," a former employee says. But soon the real impact of the policy became clear, as men entered the spaces, tagging along with their girlfriends and colonizing the phone booths.

Last summer, issues of race at the Wing came under public scrutiny. A black member wrote on Instagram that despite the West Hollywood location's "private call booth named after Moesha," a '90s sitcom character, she had found the Wing to be a "majority-white capitalist co-working space." She and a guest, she wrote, had been "harassed" by a white woman "over a parking space." Employees had been flagging similar incidents for years, but the member's post had garnered press attention. The Wing convened meetings where members and employees could discuss racial tensions. "People were emotionally vulnerable at the community gatherings on race," an employee says. But not much seemed to change. "It felt like people opened up for no reason."

The Wing's culture, many employees said, originated at the top. Though Kassan had a more muted presence in the office, Gelman was described as particular and capricious. In 2018, Gelman arrived at the Dumbo space to host her younger sister's bridal shower. Following the event, the employee working the front desk that day was unexpectedly removed from her perch and left to pick up cleaning duties, according to emails she sent to her managers. She detailed how her weekly hours had been drastically reduced without explanation. An H.R. rep finally informed her that she had been frozen out of shifts because, as the employee documented in an email to Gelman the next day, "you came in and felt like I didn't know you, because I didn't use your name when I welcomed you into the space." In a partial recording of the meeting made by the employee, her manager confirmed that the change occurred because "Audrey made those remarks about how she thought you interacted with her." (The Wing spokeswoman said, "As in any workplace, employees receive feedback and ways to improve.")

Later that year, another employee who had attended the Ocasio-Cortez fund-raiser at Gelman's home tweeted a note of discomfort about the radical-chic gathering. When Gelman spied it late at night over a weekend, she summoned her to her office the next Monday morning. The employee deleted the tweet and apologized, and Gelman responded benevolently. "Your intelligence and depth are beyond your years," Gelman wrote the employee in an email. Of the Wing, she said: "I am honestly very down to hear your unvarnished opinions on it, and ideas you have to improve it and make it better. I really mean that." But a few months later, when the employee emailed Gelman to ask about raising wages, and then began to inquire among staff about their working conditions, a Wing disciplinary write-up signed by Kassan rebuked the employee for "expressing negative views about an event at Audrey's home," "sending reactive emails directly to the C.E.O." and "interrogating staff about their pay and benefits." The employee was warned that the company wanted to see "a significant improvement" in her "impulsive and reactive behaviors" or face "corrective action up to and including termination."

Once, Gelman noticed a few dirty dishes in the beauty room of a club while Venus Williams was visiting the space, according to an employee who was working the event. She said Gelman shut the doors to the beauty room and raised her voice, saying a C.E.O. shouldn't have to clean. The employee left rattled and crying. Two employees who were present in the club that day confirmed that the employee tearfully described the incident to them shortly after it happened. (The Wing spokeswoman denied that it occurred.) Last year, Gelman told the website the Cut that "the most fun I've had in the last few months" involved rolling up her sleeves and doing dishwashing shifts at the Wing. "She washed *(Continued on Page 53)*

Bernie Sanders believes America misjudged him. Did he misjudge America?

By Robert Draper
Photographs by Eli Durst

LEFT BEHIND

BernieSanders.com
Bernie

ON THE

afternoon of Saturday, March 7, Bernie Sanders stood in an empty conference room in a hotel in downtown Chicago, looking quietly agitated, like a man trying to figure out how to be in seven places at once. A couple of blocks away in Grant Park, where Barack Obama gave his soaring victory speech in November 2008, thousands of supporters awaited him as the sound system blasted a medley of songs with a familiar lyrical theme: "talkin' 'bout a revolution" (by Tracy Chapman), "the revolution starts now" (Steve Earle), "burn, baby, burn" (the Trammps) "so let the revolution begin" (Flogging Molly). In a few minutes, one of his warm-up acts, a local teachers' union organizer named Stacy Davis Gates, would be pointedly warning the crowd, "See, moderation is a dream killer." And then, "Moderation is inhumane."

At the park and in the conference room, the air was charged with a state of urgency that did not yet approach panic but was not so distant from it. After Joe Biden's incredible string of victories on Super Tuesday, just four days earlier, a new phase of the Democratic primary campaign — one that greatly disfavored Sanders's once-unstoppable candidacy — was now underway. Former opponents and media pundits were coalescing around Biden, the newly restored front-runner, all but demanding closure to the horse race — essentially, for Sanders to pack up and go back to Vermont. Sanders had a different view of the situation: In so swiftly closing ranks, his detractors were inadvertently proving the case he had been making all along.

"Look," he told me, "we are taking on the establishment. Wall Street is now opening up their checkbooks for Biden, because we are a threat to them. The pharmaceutical industry strongly supports Biden. Health care stocks went up after Super Tuesday. So, no, I'm not shocked by this."

I suggested to Sanders that while his candidacy was demanding soul-searching on the part of the Democratic Party, it was his failure to persuade its most reliable constituents — African-American voters — that had led him to this precarious moment. But the candidate remained fixated on his adversaries. "Look, what we're trying to do is take on the entire political establishment," he repeated. "We're taking on the entire corporate establishment, the entire media establishment. The real question," he continued as he edged toward the doorway, "is: A year ago, would somebody have believed that a grass-roots coalition would be where we are today, a few points behind the establishment candidate? That is the real question. We're taking on everybody! That's something that has not been done in American history!"

The campaign was nonetheless scrambling to at least slow if not reverse Biden's momentum. Sanders had in effect conceded the South to his opponent, canceling a long-planned rally in Mississippi while furiously concentrating his efforts on the Midwest. Several appearances were added in Michigan, which would host its delegate-rich primary in three days. A victory there might change the narrative once more. Instead, as we now know, Sanders's defeat in Michigan seemed to many to be the moment his campaign ended.

He stepped toward his waiting entourage out in the hallway, then turned back. "Do you understand what I'm saying? It's like saying, you know, 'We're surprised you didn't defeat the heavyweight champion of the world!' "

Less than three weeks earlier, members of the Democratic establishment had all but resigned themselves to Sanders as the party's nominee. What could they do? He was playing by their rules, was dominating the early states and had the resources — starting with $18.2 million cash on hand at the beginning of the year, more than double Biden's amount, and then receiving a whopping $46 million in donations in February alone — to outlast every challenger. This state of affairs seemed astounding even to Sanders himself. "Coming from where I've come from in my life," he told me one afternoon in late February, "from the first time I ran for office and won 2 percent of the vote, and then the next time 1 percent of the vote, then 4 percent, then 6 percent — is the idea that, according to some polls, I'm leading the Democratic primary process for president of the United States, is that a little bit strange? Yes, it is."

Sanders was sitting in a backstage holding room in Bakersfield, Calif., where he would soon be addressing a noisy crowd of mostly young white and Latino supporters. His voice was somewhat hoarse, and he would need to reserve what lung power he had left for when he would be yelling about "the whole damn 1 percent" a few minutes later, so Sanders asked me to sit in the heavy chair directly beside his. The 78-year-old candidate wore neither jacket nor tie, just a baggy and wrinkled light blue dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows like a 1960s union boss.

He seemed relaxed, even good-humored, beneath his eternally dyspeptic veneer as he reflected on the improbable arc that began with his tenure as a small-city mayor 39 years earlier. "What we accomplished in Burlington is very much on my mind as I think about the presidency," he said. He ticked off some of those accomplishments: Most of them reflected liberal priorities, like fighting greedy landlords and "recognizing the gay community in a way that was never done before," but a few were nonideological triumphs, like bringing a minor-league baseball team to Burlington and rebuilding the city's wastewater plant. A few days earlier, his wife and confidante, Jane Sanders, told me that they had been discussing potential members of a Sanders cabinet. The media was "crazy, totally wrong" in its speculation about what his administration would look like, she insisted, adding that his choices "will not be coming from the corporate world for the F.D.A. and E.P.A." She declined to offer further details, explaining, "The way politics is now, if you float a name, that person will be destroyed."

As the candidate and I talked, the chants outside — "Ber-NIE! Ber-NIE!" — threatened to drown out our conversation. Sanders ended it with a handshake and 10 minutes later took the stage, eventually tugging a generic blue baseball cap over his bald scalp to ward off the California sun.

Pacing and forcefully gesticulating, he delivered an only slightly updated version of the 30-minute speech he has been delivering since 2015, when the political world suffered its first rude awakening to the septuagenarian socialist and his youth-driven insurgent campaign. A great deal had changed since then, but Sanders's blunt-instrument oratory had not. "The Republican establishment is getting nervous!" he bellowed. "The Democratic establishment is getting nervous! And they're going a little bit nuts! 'How can we stop Bernie? How can we stop the movement of millions of people who are standing up for justice?' So I've got news for the Republican establishment, I've got news for the Democratic establishment: THEY CAN'T STOP US!"

To the ears of many in the party establishment, such ranting stood as proof that Sanders — belligerently iconoclastic, stoking populist fury over a rigged system and vowing to carry on regardless of what damage it did to other Democratic office seekers — was a left-wing version of Donald Trump: No matter how many voters Sanders brought along with him, his revolution had the edgy makings of what some were calling a hostile takeover.

The next day, Sanders scored a decisive victory in the Nevada caucuses, in large measure because of Latino voters. Having long demonstrated his appeal among the under-40 electorate, Sanders now seemed to have a viable Democratic coalition in his grasp — something that none of his opponents had, to that point, been able to demonstrate. The unthinkable was starting to seem inevitable as the Democratic establishment somberly contemplated the implications of an avowed socialist at the top of the 2020 ticket. Would Sanders cost them the chance to pick up Senate seats in Arizona and Colorado? Would it cost them their House majority?

A Bernie Sanders rally in San Antonio on Feb. 22.
Opening pages: The stage after his March 7 rally in Grant Park in Chicago.

Fueling their anxieties was an apparently bottomless trove of provocative videos. Sanders in Moscow during the Cold War, praising the Soviet Union's mass-transit system. Sanders proposing a cap on individual wealth. Sanders expressing admiration for the literacy program introduced by Fidel Castro. When we talked in February, he pointed out to me that most if not all of these statements dated to before he was elected to Congress, back when he was "a reasonably young man." (In the case of Castro's literacy program, however, Sanders doubled down on the compliment last month, telling "60 Minutes": "He had a massive literacy program. Is that a bad thing? Even though Fidel Castro did it?") I asked if it was fair to say that he had undergone a philosophical evolution since then. "Of course I have," he said. "Look, what human being doesn't undergo changes?" He added, "If you're not a moron, you learn."

Sanders spoke as if this were a given. At the same time, the man so often described by his campaign ads and senior staff members as "authentic" and "consistent" seemed content to live and die by his reputation for being as immutable as gravity. Nearly all his current and former aides have perfected an impersonation of his thudding Brooklynese. He is understood to be a loner, a constant if not deep thinker with a resting glower and restless hair and an incapacity for niceties. He is an avid nonpresence on the Washington social circuit, has little time for the Beltway media (with its frequent comparisons of Sanders and Trump) and has even less time for the Vermont media (which has offended him by raising questions about his family's activities, including Jane Sanders's troubled tenure as president of Burlington College, when her decision to buy waterfront land for the campus sent the institution into financial insolvency).

Sanders the socialist does indeed have three houses: a Washington apartment that one former aide called "ratty"; a Burlington home so modest that in 2015 his presidential campaign advisers wanted to hold an open house so reporters could see for themselves what a skinflint Sanders was; and, yes, a lake house in North Hero, Vt., that Sanders bought with royalties from his memoir but seldom visits because he is not fond of vacationing. Nor is he a fan of sharing personal details. After considerable urging from his staff, Sanders now tells audiences that he is the son of a Polish émigré who arrived in Brooklyn penniless and unable to speak English. But while a Barack Obama or a Marco Rubio might draw from such material an uplifting only-in-America parable, the narrative Sanders quickly shifts to is how America has abjectly failed those of his working-class pedigree.

Never mind his biography, he seems to be saying. "You want to know how Bernie Sanders will govern?" Sanders asked me in Bakersfield. "He was elected mayor in 1981. Check out his record. He was elected to Congress in 1990. Check out his record. Elected to the U.S. Senate in

Photograph by Eli Durst for The New York Times

2006. Check out his record. Now people want to go back and look at something I said or did in the 1970s — fine, it's there. If you really want to know what I'd do as president, you might want to check on what I did as an elected official."

It's indeed a curious fact that those who despise Sanders and those who worship him all tend to base their appraisals almost entirely on his words, past and present, rather than on his deeds — to see him as a bomb-throwing outsider even though he has held elected office for 39 years, about half his life. Then again, Sanders himself says little about his moments of governance, apart from his vote against the Iraq war in 2002.

The early chapters of Sanders's political evolution are a familiar-enough story by now: the odyssey of the Brooklyn-bred lefty writer and documentary filmmaker who moved to the Vermont-Canada border during the Vietnam draft, ran for U.S. senator and Vermont governor in the 1970s on the socialist Liberty Union party ticket and made national headlines in 1981 as the socialist who beat the incumbent mayor of Burlington by 10 votes. Jane Sanders told me: "Somebody asked him, 'What do you consider yourself?' And he said, you know, 'Democratic socialist.' And of course then they make a big deal out of it. The New York Times, when he was elected mayor of Burlington, pushed it: 'Socialist Elected Mayor in Burlington, Vt.'" (The actual headline was "Vermont Socialist Plans Mayoralty With Bias Toward Poor.") She continued: "They did a bigger story on that than when he announced for president, which they put on A19." Sanders characterizes his mayoral triumph as a victory for movement politics, noting to me the support he received from "people in the low-income housing projects, women, police unions and neighborhood organizations — a working-class coalition that was very dissatisfied with the status quo."

But what's more notable about Sanders's eight-year tenure as mayor was how ably he governed from the center-left. Though the establishment-minded local paper, The Burlington Free Press, had initially opposed his candidacy, "by the third term, we were endorsing him," recalled Jim Welch, who was the paper's executive editor at the time. "And it was justified. It's true that he talked a lot about Reagan's policies toward Central America and nuclear arms. But mainly he was focused on things like keeping the streets plowed and supporting the arts scene. He worked closely with the business community to revitalize the waterfront and preserve the downtown pedestrian mall. I think by the end of it, the business leaders found themselves saying, 'Boy, I think we made that work.'"

In 1990, three years after U.S. News & World Report named Sanders one of America's best mayors, he defeated the Republican incumbent for Vermont's at-large congressional seat. He found no hero's welcome in Washington, however. Referring to the centrist Democratic coalition, Jane Sanders recalled, "The Blue Dogs didn't want Bernie in the caucus: 'He's an independent; let him go be an independent.'"

Feeling snubbed, Sanders reverted to fringe leftist, a loner who vocally criticized Democrats and Republicans in more or less equal measure and was safely ignorable by both. "We didn't have much contact with him, either on bills or on votes," former Representative John Tanner, a Tennessee Democrat who led the Blue Dog caucus during Sanders's House tenure, told me. A senior House Democrat (who spoke on the condition of anonymity so as not to be seen as stoking intraparty tensions) unfavorably compared Sanders's 16-year legacy with that of one of his most vigorous supporters today, Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington State: "She's equally liberal, and she's made a very big impression in her first three years in Congress. That was not Bernie."

In 2005, Jim Jeffords, the Republican-turned-independent senator from Vermont, announced his retirement. Within days, Sanders declared his intention to run for the seat. Recognizing that Sanders was probably popular enough to beat any Democratic candidate, the party's Senate leaders, Harry Reid and Chuck Schumer (who attended the same Brooklyn high school as Sanders), opted instead to pre-emptively welcome him to their caucus with open arms. "It was night and day," Jane Sanders recalled. "Harry asked Bernie, 'What do you want?' And he got five committee assignments."

In return, Reid got the Burlington-mayor version of Bernie Sanders. As a senator, he worked to move whatever legislation was in front of him to the left: expanding Social Security benefits, restricting loopholes for pharmaceutical companies, demanding that the bank-reform bill include an audit of the Federal Reserve. But he also voted reliably with the Democratic caucus. He worked successfully with some Republicans, including John McCain, on a 2014 bill to improve medical access for military veterans. In 2018, he worked with Mike Lee, a Utah Republican, on a war-powers resolution seeking to end America's role in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen (which Trump subsequently vetoed).

Sanders was no more immune to pork-barrel politics than any other senator, setting aside his dovish proclivities to support basing F-35 jets at the Vermont Air National Guard base in Burlington. And he could be diplomatic in his pursuit of his big-picture ambitions. When Reid asked for his support for the Affordable Care Act in late 2009, Sanders agreed in exchange for two concessions: a $10 billion addition in the bill for community health centers and a floor vote on Sanders's preferred health care measure, a single-payer system. Reid agreed to both. When Republicans tried a parliamentary measure on the single-payer-amendment vote that would delay and perhaps scuttle the A.C.A. altogether, Sanders, rather than standing on principle, withdrew the amendment.

Sanders even attended a few Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee events with wealthy donors as a favor to Schumer — a fact that Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign would use against him, leaking a photo of Sanders sunbathing at a committee retreat. Tad Devine, Sanders's strategist in 2016, who had worked for Al Gore and John Kerry's presidential campaigns, recalls Sanders's telling him during the campaign, "Tad, you're my link to the Democratic establishment." Somewhat taken aback, Devine replied: "Bernie, you're a U.S. senator. What's more establishment than that?"

'IT'S LIKE SAYING, YOU KNOW, "WE'RE SURPRISED YOU DIDN'T DEFEAT THE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD!"'

By allying himself with the Democratic Party in the Senate instead of heckling from the fringe, Sanders did sporadically succeed at pushing the party to the left. And his decision to mount a Democratic primary campaign in the 2016 presidential election, instead of a third-party one, had profound consequences for him and for the party. In March 2015, according to Gallup, 76 percent of Americans had either not heard of or had no opinion of Sanders. By the end of 2016, he was one of the most famous politicians in the country, with a higher favorability rating than either Hillary Clinton or Trump. As he won enough early primaries to forestall Clinton's easy victory, she was forced to move left on Social Security and trade agreements; practically overnight, Sanders's pet issues like Medicare for All and universal higher education went from fringe positions to the center of Democratic policy debates.

Even before Sanders quit the race early in the summer of 2016, the river of bad blood between his insurgent campaign and the Democratic establishment seemed impossible to bridge. When Devine advised his client to voice his support for Hillary Clinton, Devine recalls Sanders's replying: "Listen, Tad, you don't know what it's like to go in front of 20,000 people. As soon as I mention her name, they'll scream. I'm going to bring them along; it's going to have to be a process. Let's start with the Democratic platform."

An ugly platform fight then ensued, beginning with squabbles over which members of Sanders's camp would be allowed on the platform committee and extending into fights over language about fracking, health care and Israel. And though Sanders made more than 30 campaign stops for Clinton during the final weeks of the campaign, an internal analysis of Cooperative Congressional Election Study data conducted by the Sanders pollster Ben Tulchin found that a distinct cohort of Sanders's electorate had migrated into Trump's column.

Still, Sanders and the Democratic establishment were not quite finished with each other. Schumer created a Senate leadership post for Sanders, putting him in charge of "outreach" — that is to say, developing grass-roots support for the party on key issues. The party had come to recognize, however grudgingly, that Sanders had proved himself as more than just an agitator. He had galvanized young voters in a way no candidate from either party had done since Obama, building a millions-strong grass-roots army and small-donor database at a time when the party — cast entirely out of power in Washington, fighting the dismantling of Obama's policy legacy and looking ahead to the 2018 midterm elections — needed all the help it could get.

As Sanders began staffing up for his 2020 presidential campaign, he recruited three alumni of Reid's staff: Josh Orton became his national policy director, Faiz Shakir joined as his campaign manager and Ari Rabin-Havt was named Shakir's deputy. In an unusual move, Sanders also hired Hillary Clinton's former opposition researcher, Tyson Brody, who had spent several months in the previous cycle digging up dirt on the man who would now be his boss. The 2020 campaign would outraise the competition by a two-to-one margin in the first three contests and deploy superior technological tools — among them peer-to-peer texting, the Bern app (which proved to be a key organizing resource for the Sanders operation in Iowa) and the live-streaming of every single campaign event. It also advertised heavily in Latino communities on Sanders's economic message, steadily gaining support from that group in early states like Nevada and California while Biden's Latino numbers remained static, as entrance and exit polls in those states would later reveal.

In the meantime, Sanders decided early in the race — against the advice of several of his top aides — to go easy on the front-runner Biden, an establishment figure who had always treated him with kindness and respect. It's difficult to imagine what else the party would have wanted out of a top-tier campaign — except to have someone besides Sanders at the head of it.

The high point of the Sanders campaign occurred on Feb. 22, the date of the Nevada caucuses. No team was better prepared for that event. Sanders had a paid staff of more than 200 in Nevada, an astonishing commitment that reflected a strategic determination to dominate the early states. From the moment I entered the East Las Vegas Community Center, a caucus site serving a densely Latino part of the city, it was apparent who was going to win that day. Sanders regalia dominated the panorama, his volunteers outnumbering those for all the other candidates combined — Biden, Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar, Tom Steyer — by perhaps three to one. The volunteers were well prepared and, in almost all cases, unfailingly courteous to the others in attendance.

But then I happened to notice a lanky, bearded young man in a burgundy cap that read "Bernie." He was tailing Julián Castro, the former housing secretary and presidential candidate now stumping for Warren at this site — walking inches behind Castro and asking mocking questions about his tenure in the Obama administration that the secretary studiously ignored. Then off to my left, I heard a male voice shout: "That's an absolute lie! You're a liar! Show me your studies!" It was a stocky young white man in a blue T-shirt that identified him as a "captain" among Sanders's Nevada volunteers. He was yelling at a black man who had been telling another caucusgoer that Sanders's Medicare for All plan would double his taxes.

A middle-aged white woman who was a more senior volunteer than the captain rushed over. Apologizing to the black man, she said: "We all come from the same place. We all want a future for our children." Pulling the captain aside, I could hear her quietly admonish him as his face reddened: "When you start yelling at someone instead of trying to persuade them, do you know what happens? They call you a Bernie Bro."

Over and over, Sanders insisted that his coalition amounted to a "unity campaign." An early sign that Democratic voters did not necessarily see it that way, however, was visible in the Iowa caucuses. The caucus rules allow voters whose preferred candidates fall short on the first ballot to switch their support to another candidate on the second. But while Sanders performed strongly on the first ballot, he attracted notably few additional caucusgoers on the second and came up just short of Buttigieg, who won, in the final delegate tally.

When it came to broadening its coalition, the Sanders campaign offered few gestures of conciliation: no intimations that he would govern as he did in Burlington and in the Senate; no across-the-board denunciations of Bernie Bro harassment; no evocation of an America under a Sanders presidency in which it was possible to see anything other than round-the-clock class warfare.

"What separates Bernie's team," said Brian Fallon, the press secretary for the 2016 Clinton campaign and a veteran of Democratic politics, "is that they're movement people. A lot of people in the operative class who do this for a living are highly skilled but also a little bit functionary: They move from one cycle to the next, very malleable with platforms and agendas." He went on: "The people Bernie attracts, and I mean this as a compliment, are people who wouldn't sign up for just anything. If they weren't with him, they'd be grinding away at an advocacy organization or laboring with a House primary challenger. They're driven by the cause." Indeed, many of the campaign's most important state directors — among them Misty Rebik in Iowa and Rafael Navar in California — were veteran progressive activists, not barnacled campaign itinerants. They were believers recruiting other believers from a universe that in many cases had become alienated from the Democratic Party.

At times, Sanders's top staff members appeared to wear alienation as a badge of honor. Jeff Weaver, the campaign's chief strategist, who began his association with Sanders as his campaign driver in 1986, informed reporters in the spin room after the Feb. 26 debate that the very idea of Sanders as the Democratic nominee accepting the billion dollars that Mike Bloomberg has pledged to defeat Trump was "a hard no." When I asked Rabin-Havt, the deputy campaign manager, whether Bernie's Democratic detractors simply feared that a socialist was unelectable, he replied: "I think they have laughed at us and ignored us for two years now. And I would link the establishment forces, in a broad sense, to the media, the people who attend cocktail parties and give $2,800 to candidates while eating canapés, the people who were at the Alfalfa Club after-party at Jeff Bezos's house. I was talking to someone from that set the other day. They said: 'Just who are your donors? I don't think I've ever met a Bernie donor.' Exactly! Our world is your server at Starbucks, the guy who packs and sends your books from Amazon. *That* is our world."

That sense of embattlement has bred solidarity within the Sanders ranks, but also a view that every conceivable force is arrayed against them. Sanders aides privately expressed to me their belief that the party deliberately chose not to schedule a debate between Super Tuesday and the Michigan primary so as to disadvantage Sanders; that leading data analysts like Nate Silver, Nate Cohn and David Wasserman were willfully "anti-Bernie"; that news organizations, including this one, had a conscious bias against Sanders. The candidate himself wondered aloud to reporters whether The Washington Post, which is owned by the megabillionaire Jeff Bezos, had possibly conspired with intelligence officials to leak a classified briefing in which Sanders was told that President Vladimir Putin of Russia was trying to aid his candidacy.

Above all, they resent the charge that Sanders is an "all or nothing" absolutist. One top Sanders aide reminded me that it was, after all, Sanders, the supposed Medicare for All zealot, who in the weeks before Trump's inauguration headed rallies in an effort to save Obama's imperiled Affordable Care Act. "The fundamental point of the attack," the aide then said, "is to show that Bernie really doesn't care about the people he's fighting for and cares more about the purity of his ideology. That's [expletive] and has been disproven by what he's done."

So why wouldn't Sanders make these points? Why wouldn't the aide say them on the record? "We didn't come into politics yesterday," he replied dryly. "So, no, especially in a primary campaign, you're not going to see us compromise with ourselves on the trademark issues."

The case for Sanders as the superior Democratic nominee was simple and not without logic. As the party's pre-eminent progressive, *(Continued on Page 47)*

We knew the sexual-harassment allegations against my wife were lies. But how could we prove it?

The Accusation
By Sarah Viren

Photographs by Ryan Pfluger

We were at a friend's doctoral graduation party on a Friday night at the end of March. I had a glass of wine in one hand and our toddler on my hip when Marta found me. "I got a really weird email," she said.

The moon hung full over our heads, and all of us were in short sleeves, holding beers or wine and licking barbecue off our fingers while our kids played hide-and-seek in the dark.

"What?" I said.

"Something about me sexually harassing students," Marta said, taking F. from my arms.

"What?" I said, louder this time.

"It's probably spam," she said, and then she disappeared.

That night we toasted our friend and her newly minted Ph.D. She thanked her husband for his help, her professors swapped stories about her and we toasted them for their mentorship. Afterward, we all wandered around the backyard talking about our kids or research or how perfect Arizona can seem in March.

When it was time to leave, I found our older daughter, N., standing on our friend's bed with another little girl, who held a fistful of toilet paper and looked at me the way kids do when they've done something wrong. Strips of toilet paper littered the carpet, and I wondered whether one of them had peed her pants. Or maybe they'd had a toilet-paper fight. Or this was their version of snow in the desert.

"We're gonna pull out her tooth," the girl said before I could say anything, looking at N. and her loose front tooth.

I laughed. Later, I realized I never would have guessed that a tooth was at the center of that mess. Only a confession gave it meaning.

That night, after the girls fell asleep, Marta and I crawled into bed and pulled out our phones to reread the email she received. The anonymous sender wanted her to be aware that someone was posting about her on the message board Reddit. The email included a screenshot of the first post, which came from a person claiming to be part of a sexual-harassment case against Marta. "If you, like me, have been harassed by Dr. Marta, please contact the anonymous email line with A.S.U.'s Title IX Office," the person wrote on the subreddit for our university, Arizona State University.

Ten minutes later, another post had gone up, ostensibly from someone else. "I attended a party at Marta's house one night, where she got several graduate students drunk and then asked me to her bedroom. When I tried to leave she inappropriately touched me and I dropped her as my graduate adviser."

I turned to look at Marta. She was staring at her phone. I reached out to touch her hip. "This isn't spam," I finally said.

That was last year, the year I turned 40 and, in the span of four weeks in January and February, flew to four different states to interview for jobs at universities and colleges in places besides Arizona. This is an experience in academic circles called "being on the market," a phrase that people tend to speak with both resignation and trepidation, as when facing the pillory.

To go on the market, you first apply to dozens of jobs at universities, all of which require individualized application materials — cover letters, teaching philosophies, writing samples, research statements. Of the sometimes hundreds of people who apply to each job, only about 15 get a screening interview, and of those, only around three are invited to what is called a "campus visit," a process that entails flying out to a college or university, sitting for interviews with anyone from students to the president, giving a talk or a reading, often teaching a mock class and then going out for a nice meal or two with a handful of faculty members who might one day be your colleagues. That winter, I had four campus visits, which meant I was lucky, which also meant I was exhausted. Marta stayed home with our girls each time I was away. Which meant she was exhausted, too.

> Was she really saying that if they realized the accusations were invented, they would still investigate?

My dream job was at the University of Michigan. They were looking for someone to help develop a potential creative-nonfiction concentration at the university, which houses one of the best creative-writing programs in the country. The faculty members I'd met were smart and kind and the students bright and assertive. And then there was the town itself: small, pretty and filled with great public schools.

It was the kind of place we had hoped to live ever since Marta and I met in Iowa City 10 years earlier. She was a Spaniard who grew up in the suburbs of Madrid soon after the death of Franco and later lived in London, Paris, Santiago and Beijing before moving to Iowa City for a graduate degree in linguistics. I had moved to Iowa for an M.F.A. in creative nonfiction after half a dozen years as a newspaper reporter in Florida and Texas. What most attracted me about her, besides the way she looked in a leather jacket, was how little she cared about what anyone thought of her.

What she liked about me, she said, was my independence. That and the fact that I'm generous, even when I get mad.

By the time I turned 40, we had been married for six years, had two kids and had moved twice for academic jobs, and professionally, each of us felt as if we were beginning to find our place in the world. My first book had come out; Marta was publishing articles and presenting regularly at conferences. We also each had tenure-track jobs, me teaching creative nonfiction, Marta Spanish linguistics, at a university we liked — if only it weren't so far away from our families on the East Coast and from the small-town life we dreamed of when we first decided to have children.

"Can we please move to Michigan?" Marta joked several times after I got back from my January interview.

"Stop it," I said. But sometimes before bed, I looked at houses for sale in Ann Arbor. I most loved the Craftsman bungalows with their wide porches and green lawns that, from the desert of Arizona, looked like a world someone else had dreamed up.

On Valentine's Day, I flew out to Virginia to give a reading, and the next day, before flying home, I noticed that I had missed a call. Listening to the message, I heard the voice of a faculty member from Michigan asking me to call him back. He sounded as if he were smiling.

After I hung up the phone with him, I texted Marta: "JOB OFFER FROM MICHIGAN."

I was told the offer letter would arrive soon, and in the meantime, the university would have a "dual-career coordinator" looking for possible jobs for Marta.

The following week, the same faculty member explained that a final committee approval meant we would have to wait a little longer. But then two weeks passed, and three, and four, and I still

Opening photograph: The writer (right) with her wife, Marta.

hadn't received the contract, nor had we heard anything concrete about a position for Marta. I started to worry. "We shouldn't have started looking at houses," Marta said, only half kidding.

"We'll hear something soon," I said.

"Or not," Marta said.

That was a joke between us. I always assume the news will be good. Marta is the dour European. When I say something hopeful, she responds, "Or not."

By the end of March, the job had begun to feel like something I'd imagined. I still looked at houses in Ann Arbor, but I had also started looking in Arizona again too. Our lease was up at the end of June, and we had to move either way.

That Friday, we went to our friend's party, hoping that it would distract us from the anxiety of waiting. About halfway through, though, Marta got that strange email she thought was spam. And then, everything changed.

The first two Reddit posts about Marta were quickly taken down, but I kept checking the site all weekend. One more went up on Saturday, and another on Monday morning. The first complained about the previous posts' being deleted. Its author wrote: "Lesbian professors, too, are capable of harassing students despite common narratives."

'That's a classic horror-movie move!' a friend of mine said. 'The villain injures himself.'

But it was the second post that scared me. "Hi y'all," it read. "I'm looking for advice. My linguistics professor has offered me wine several times in her office and acted inappropriately when I see her in various queer spaces in Tempe or Phoenix."

The mention of wine and Marta's office reinforced what I already felt I knew: that the accusations were false. Marta almost never used her office; she met students at coffee shops or via Zoom. And she rarely drank wine. Or went to any "queer spaces" that I knew of.

The use of "y'all," though, made me stop. We were in Arizona. No one says y'all here.

I decided someone outside our university had to be behind the posts. But who? And why? Marta and I talked about it every night that weekend, after the girls went to bed, trying to remember an enemy she might have. We brought up former graduate students and classmates, colleagues and exes, but none of them made sense. I had one more idea, but I didn't want to say it out loud. I felt guilty for thinking anyone might be doing this to her, to us — even though it was clear someone was.

After dropping off the girls that Monday morning, I wrote to the department chair at Michigan to check in. He responded right away. "I understand — and share — the wish for expediency here," he wrote. "I've been told the deans hope to wrap this up by the end of this week."

"Doesn't that seem like an odd phrase?" I asked Marta.

"No," she said. "Why?"

" 'Wrap up' indicates a problem being solved," I said.

The only good news was that Marta also received an email that morning from an associate dean at Michigan asking if she could talk the following day. "It has to be about a job," I said.

"Or not," she said, but she was smiling this time.

The next morning, I stood just outside the door of Marta's study as she answered the associate dean's call. I heard her say hello and how nice it was to finally talk. Then I watched her listen. She nodded. She looked up at me. She shook her head. She said, yes, that she understood. Then she wagged her finger, as if scolding hope. When she started to talk, it wasn't about her research or teaching, but about the Reddit posts. I heard her say that as far as she knew, she wasn't under a Title IX investigation, and she had no idea why someone said she was. I heard her promise to figure out what was going on. Then she hung up and looked over my shoulder at a shadow on the wall. "She told me they had credible information that I'm under a Title IX investigation," she said.

"What?" I said.

"So," she said. "It's not great news."

In academia, the phrase "Title IX investigation" is so common that we sometimes forget that many people have never heard the term. When I called my dad after Marta hung up with the associate dean and left to go teach, he asked me — once I stopped crying — what a Title IX investigation even was.

What it usually means, I said, is an investigation of sexual misconduct. We hear about them most often in cases of sexual assault — usually of a female student by a male student, usually in relation to the campus rape crisis. But Title IX also applies to faculty or staff: that professor who won't stop asking his student out for drinks; that teacher who touches students on the arm, thigh, breast; that mentor who persuades her graduate student to sleep with her, even after he has said no.

We found out that Marta was under investigation later that day. The first accusation against her, we learned, had come in via A.S.U.'s anonymous reporting system at 5:21 a.m. on March 14, almost two weeks before we knew anything about it. It was sent by someone calling herself "Rebecca James," who said she was a graduate student in Marta's department.

"I have had two undergrads come to me and one fellow graduate student regarding Dr. Marta Cabrero," "Rebecca" wrote. "Dr. Cabrero has put these students in sexually compromising situations. Inviting them to meet her in her office late at night — when the building is mostly empty — she has offered to help their careers (grad student) or grades and standing in the department (undergrad) in exchange for sexual favors."

Reading that email, I remembered the year I arrived in Iowa. All the local newspapers were reporting on a professor who was accused of requesting sexual favors from students in exchange for higher grades. When confronted, he drove out to the same woods where I ran each morning and shot himself. I tried to imagine Marta in his place, asking to touch or kiss students in exchange for a grade. But I couldn't do it. I know many spouses of sexual criminals say this, but I was sure: She just wasn't the type.

What Marta obsessed over was that "Rebecca James" had referred to her as Marta Cabrero. In Spain, everyone has two last names. Hers are Tecedor and Cabrero. The first last name is the primary one, so people in her department would call her Dr. Tecedor, though most of the time, per her preference, everyone just calls her Marta.

Marta tried to explain the discrepancy to Melanie, the university investigator assigned to her case, during her first interview on March 28, but Melanie seemed unimpressed. "I do think it's

relevant to point that out," she said, before pivoting back to a long list of questions she had: Did Marta meet with students at night? Did Marta offer alcohol to students? Did Marta ask for sexual favors from her students? Did Marta know anyone named Rebecca James? No, Marta said, no and no and no.

Melanie also hadn't been able to locate a current student named Rebecca James in Marta's department, but she said that the name could always be an alias, and she was still obligated to investigate Marta now that a "credible" accusation had been made.

Their interview at the university's Office of University Rights and Responsibilities, which manages Title IX complaints, lasted almost an hour. Afterward, I briefly met with Melanie in a large conference room with a box of tissues on the table. She said she didn't have anything to ask me, but she could answer any questions I had.

"We just want to figure this out as quickly as possible," I told her. "It might have already jeopardized our job opportunities —" My voice broke.

I reached for a tissue. Melanie was young, probably in her late 20s or early 30s, with long straight hair and an impassive face. "You're fine," she said, though it was clear I wasn't.

"If you can figure out that it's an outsider or somebody from the outside that's posing as a student," I finally said, "can you just close the investigation?"

"Good question," Melanie responded, her voice bright again. "Because of the funding that we receive through Title IX, we're required to investigate everything. And with that we want to really run everything to the ground."

I nodded. I knew that universities could lose federal funding if they didn't show they were protecting students, and I was glad — I am glad — for that. But I was still confused. Melanie continued. "If we find out that — and Marta asked the question — if we find out that the information is false, for our purposes that's not really our end goal; we're just trying to determine whether or not there's a policy violation."

Listening to my recording of our conversation recently, I wondered why I didn't stop Melanie at that point. Was she really saying that if they realized the accusations were invented, if the accuser herself was a fiction, they would still investigate? Did it not matter whether the complaints were true or false?

The first time I went on the academic job market was during the 2016 election. I sat for a Skype interview only a month and a half after giving birth to F., and only a month after Donald Trump was elected president. I was still bleary-eyed and foggy-headed from the birth and the lack of sleep that followed, and one interviewer asked me, given the recent crisis regarding fake news and alternative facts, what responsibility I thought writers of creative nonfiction had toward our collective understanding of truth.

My answer meandered into platitudes about truth being subjective and facts being contingent; I wasn't invited to a campus visit for that job. But I've thought about that question a lot since then and how I might have answered it better.

A true story written about Marta and me at this point could easily include all the facts we know right now: that complaints were made about Marta, that Reddit posts appeared and that an investigation was opened. And if I were to read a story like that — without knowing Marta or me or any other facts that came to light later — I would conclude either that Marta had done it or, at the very least, that she was the kind of professor who crossed the line, and that her actions had been misconstrued. I would assume, that is, that even if some of the facts were wrong, the truth lay somewhere in the middle.

So while truth may be subjective, its balustrades are always the facts at hand. And in the case of our story, I quickly realized that we would never persuade anyone of what we knew to be true — that the accusations were invented — if we couldn't isolate one key fact: who was making them up.

But Title IX investigations are a different genre of storytelling, so the facts the investigators want are different, too. As Melanie explained during that first interview, her investigation would end with what is called a "determination letter." And that letter could offer only two story lines: Either Marta had violated a policy — and then there would be consequences for her job, including possible dismissal — or there was "insufficient evidence" that Marta had violated a policy, and we could presumably go back to the way things were before.

When I asked Melanie how long it would take for her to determine that there was insufficient evidence, she told me she couldn't say — it depended on the factors, by which I think she also meant the facts. (Later a spokesman told me A.S.U. aims to close all sexual-harassment cases within 60 days.)

"For us this is purely administrative," Melanie said at one point. In other words, Title IX investigations are not criminal in nature, even if they feel that way at times. This is why Marta wasn't allowed to have a lawyer present during her interview, even as she was told that any of her answers could be used against her. And it's the reason that even if we could prove that someone was targeting Marta, Melanie could never compel that person to talk to her if they weren't part of our university. But also, that person would never face consequences for what they were doing.

The only way to accomplish that, a defamation lawyer told us when we set up a consultation with him, was if we pursued that person ourselves. Which brought me back to that question of *y'all*.

A couple of weeks after I was offered the Michigan job, an acquaintance of mine — whom I will refer to as J., though that's not his real initial — reached out to see whether I planned to take it. I knew through friends that he had also been a finalist, and in his texts to me, he said he wanted to acknowledge the "weirdness" of the situation. J. told me he was miserable where he was living — a conservative town where it is difficult to be openly gay — and implied that if I turned down the job, it would be offered to him. "Don't respond," Marta told me. "He shouldn't be contacting you."

But I remembered how hard it was for Marta and me when we lived in West Texas for four years after Iowa and before we got jobs in Arizona, the way we were scared to hold hands while walking with our girls in the neighborhood. Then I imagined being a gay man in a similar situation, how it must wear him down. I remembered, too, how emotionally draining the academic job market can be.

I texted J. back. I said I wanted to accept the job, but we were waiting to hear if Marta would be offered a spousal hire. I promised to let him know as soon as we had more news. "Totally!" he wrote back. "That makes sense!"

But after that, he kept texting. He congratulated me on being a finalist for a book award and said he hoped negotiations with Michigan were going well. He asked for travel recommendations in Santa Fe and told me he was reading Jonathan Franzen's new essay collection. "Any news?" he wrote midway through March, when my offer letter still hadn't arrived. "I've been thinking of y'all."

"I promise I'll tell you once we decide one way or the other," I responded.

"Thank you for being a good human," he texted back.

Then on a Friday evening near the end of March, he wrote, "WHY ARE THEY DOING THIS TO US."

That same night, the first Reddit posts went up.

"It has to be him," I told Marta after her conversation with the associate dean, after I was finally ready to speak my fear out loud. I showed her his other texts. I told her how desperately he seemed to want the job. I mentioned how often he used "y'all" — in texts but also on social media.

Afterward, she didn't say "or not." She just stared at me. "But how do we prove it?"

March slipped into April, and I stopped sleeping. When I did sleep, I woke up from dreams that I was forgetting everything. I canceled my trip to a writing conference where I was supposed to present because I worried J. would be there, but then at home I kept scrolling through his social-media posts looking for clues.

I wrote draft emails to people at Michigan or A.S.U. filled with rhetorical arguments that I hoped would make them see the truth, but Marta would read them and say I sounded desperate or unhinged. "We just have to wait," she said.

The writer and her wife at home with one of their children.

A friend had reached out to me by then about J., to let me know he'd been complaining for weeks that I was offered the job over him. He had also told others about Marta's Title IX investigation — something he shouldn't have known about on his own. After talking to that friend, I no longer doubted that he was behind everything that was happening to us. But I still had no idea how to prove it. (The New York Times reached out repeatedly to J. and a lawyer who has represented him for comment about this article. No one responded to the queries.)

Eventually, we decided to tell Melanie about our suspicions. She wrote back almost immediately: "I would actually like to meet with you both a second time, as I received some new information yesterday."

We hoped she was dropping the case, or maybe she'd talked with someone from Michigan about the information they'd received, as we'd recommended. Instead, when we arrived and took seats together across the table from her, Melanie said: "I've received another anonymous complaint."

The accusation had come from a different email and ostensibly a different person, someone calling herself "Jessica P. Newman." It had been sent on April Fools' Day.

The opening paragraph identified "Jessica" as one of Marta's graduate students and repeated parts of the previous complaints. Then the email took a turn I should have expected but still didn't.

"One night," "Jessica" wrote, "Marta and her wife Sarah had a party for queer students and faculty at their house, and offered me glass of wine after glass of wine and eventually shots of whiskey. When most of the others had left, Marta asked to show me a painting in her bedroom, and when we entered, Sarah was on the bed, topless, and asked us to join her. I said I would be calling an Uber now, but before I could leave the room, Marta took my hand and placed it on her wife's bare chest."

The interview room we were in was smaller this time, and Marta and I sat on the same side of a table, reading the email together, while Melanie watched us. It felt like a test we were failing or a novel that had stopped making sense. I imagined everyone who would read or had read this email — Melanie, her supervisor, the university provost — and how they would all picture me topless on my bed, trying to seduce a student, while presumably my kids slept in their bedroom down the hall.

In closing, "Jessica" wrote: "I do not know how to proceed at this point, but thank you for your guidance. I do wish to remain anonymous at this time."

When we finished reading, Melanie said she wanted to talk to us separately. I watched Marta leave the room and set my phone on the table to record the interview. Melanie told me I was now also under investigation and said she needed to ask me some questions. "I want to talk about these parties," she said. "So tell me what that looks like."

"So, there's never been a party," I said. I told her that we'd hosted two staid dinners for Marta's graduate-seminar students. But at some point both evenings, I had put the kids to bed, and after that no one went near the bedrooms. "And I definitely was never topless on the bed," I added, interrupting whatever question Melanie had next. I wanted to move past that part of the interview as quickly as possible, but saying the words out loud only made it worse — as if by negating the accusation I had somehow reinforced it. "I'm trying to think if we even have a painting."

Melanie interrupted this time: "That's what I was going to ask."

I tried to picture our bedroom walls while she waited for me to answer. I saw a print of a map of Galveston hanging above our dresser and the antique mirror I bought at an auction in Iowa on another wall. Then I remembered a third wall, and my favorite painting hanging there. I'd found it at a garage sale while working my first newspaper job in Florida. It's of an androgynous kid in a flat cap smoking a cigarette, looking out with a brazen stare I immediately loved. So much so that I'd put it in our bedroom — just as the email claimed.

And that fact — or the fact that one fact in my life lined up with a fiction being created about us — disoriented me. For a second, I could almost picture myself on the bed, just like what "Jessica" had described. "There is a painting, a small painting," I told *(Continued on Page 49)*

Photograph by Ryan Pfluger for The New York Times

Twenty years ago, India let Masood Azhar go. Now he and his jihadist group may be one of the greatest obstacles to resolving the crisis in Kashmir.

By Yudhijit Bhattacharjee

Illustration by Karolis Strautniekas

THE TERRORIST WHO GOT AWAY

WITH ITS

snow-capped mountains and its emerald valleys, teeming with apple orchards and fields of saffron, India's northernmost province of Jammu and Kashmir can sometimes resemble an enchanted kingdom. But for decades, this patch of ground has instead felt cursed, as the center of a bloody and seemingly never-ending conflict between India and Pakistan. Although 70 years have passed since the area became a part of India, it remains a flash point between the two nations.

This August, India moved to cement Jammu and Kashmir's place in the Indian union by revoking the autonomy it was granted at the time of its accession. While the change was largely welcomed in Jammu, which is predominantly Hindu, it sparked anger in the overwhelmingly Muslim Kashmir valley, where a separatist movement has simmered since the late 1980s. To pre-empt large-scale protests and anticipated violence, the Indian government enforced a security clampdown across the valley, shutting down mobile-phone and Internet services and placing dozens of political leaders and activists under house arrest. Seven months on, Kashmir remains tense. Only in the last month have restrictions on internet use been lifted and mobile internet speeds restored to full capacity.

Indian officials say these tough measures were necessary not only to prevent civic unrest but also to guard against the threat of terrorism from across the border. They point to a long history of attacks inflicted upon Kashmir and other targets in India by groups based in Pakistan. Just a year ago, the Jaish-e-Muhammad — a terrorist organization led by a 51-year-old Pakistani cleric named Masood Azhar — directed a deadly car bombing against a convoy of troops in Pulwama, near Srinagar, killing at least 40 members of the Central Reserve Police Force. The attack was carried out by a 22-year-old Indian man who left his village in Kashmir a year earlier to join the ranks of the Jaish. Within an hour of the bombing, the group claimed responsibility for it on social media and circulated a video of the young attacker, dressed in fatigues and holding an assault rifle, declaring that the Jaish had thousands of soldiers like him who were ready to undertake suicide missions to free Kashmir from India.

Pakistan's current prime minister, Imran Khan, has publicly stated that Pakistan's Army organized and trained militant groups years ago to wage jihad against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Some of these groups continue to operate in Pakistan, four decades after the end of the Soviet-Afghan war. The country's former president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has acknowledged that Pakistani intelligence enabled Jaish and similar groups to carry out attacks within India. Such admissions confirm what Indian officials say they've always known: that organizations like Jaish have become part of a Pakistani strategy for wresting Kashmir from Indian control.

For that and other reasons, Azhar has become India's most-wanted terrorist. Just as the pursuit of Osama bin Laden drew the United States into a long and continuing military engagement in Afghanistan, Azhar's success in orchestrating a series of attacks on Indian soil in recent years has angered India to the point that eliminating Azhar and his organization has become a key strategic objective for India's security establishment. Twelve days after Jaish's attack in February 2019, Indian fighter jets flew 50 miles or so across the Line of Control, the disputed border, into the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, in order to bomb a hilltop near Balakot that Indian officials said was the site of a Jaish terrorist-training camp. It was the first time since the war between the two nations in 1971 that India has conducted airstrikes inside Pakistani airspace. Embarrassed by the incursion, Pakistan retaliated the next day by deploying its jets to attack Indian military installations. The retaliation was countered by the Indian Air Force, leading to a brief dogfight and the downing of an Indian fighter plane.

Despite the deadly attack in Pulwama, and the other attacks for which Jaish claims responsibility, Pakistan has refused to prosecute Azhar or bring the organization to justice. Indian officials find this galling but unsurprising, because, they contend, Inter-Services Intelligence — Pakistan's powerful intelligence service — provides Jaish with funding, training and logistical support to fight a proxy war against India.

The impunity with which Azhar has operated for so long is a source of anger among Indian security officials. It keeps raw an old wound; it reminds them that two decades ago, they had the cleric in their grasp, languishing in one of their prisons. But after the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight by Azhar's associates, which Indian investigators say bore the marks of a Pakistani intelligence operation, they were forced to let him go in exchange for the passengers' freedom. He founded Jaish shortly afterward. Though it hasn't carried out any notable attacks in Kashmir in the past six months, the group continues to be a threat, Indian officials say, and will most likely attempt to exploit Kashmiri anger over the government's restrictions to engineer strikes at the earliest opportunity. Because India has in effect declared a policy of crossing the border into Pakistan to fight terrorists when necessary, the next attack on Indian soil that can be attributed to Jaish or any other Pakistan-based organization has the potential to ignite a full-blown conflict between two nuclear-armed neighbors.

THE HOSTILITIES between India and Pakistan date back to their birth as sovereign nations, in August 1947, when the subcontinent gained independence from the British. Even though the partition that created the two countries was based on religious lines, their political identities were shaped by two contrasting visions of religion's proper role in matters of state. Pakistan, a Muslim-majority nation, went on to become an Islamic republic. India, predominantly Hindu, chose to become a secular democracy.

Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim-majority province ruled by a Hindu maharajah named Hari Singh, initially opted not to join either country. But weeks after the two nations were formed, several thousand armed tribesmen from Pakistan rode into Kashmir in dozens of trucks, in what would be the first of many attempts by the Pakistani military to seize control of the territory. As the intruders advanced, Singh asked the Indian government for help in repelling the invasion, which India was willing to provide — on the condition that the ruler sign an agreement merging Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian union. Singh consented, and on Oct. 26, the Indian military began airlifting troops and equipment into Srinagar. The province became a part of India, though Pakistan had taken control of roughly a third of the state by the time fighting ended in 1948. Under the deal Singh made with the Indian government, the remaining territory of Jammu and Kashmir was granted autonomy over its internal administration and allowed to have its own constitution.

Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India, even as a quasi-independent state, was a blow to the very idea upon which Pakistan had been founded: that Muslims on the subcontinent belonged together in their own homeland. According to that principle, a Muslim-majority state — one geographically contiguous with Pakistan, no less — couldn't possibly belong on India's map. But for India, the inclusion of Jammu and Kashmir validated one of *its* defining principles: that religion was inconsequential to the nation-state. And so, the conflict between the two countries over Kashmir was about more than territory. It was, at its core, a clash of identity.

Pakistan did not accept the new arrangement. In 1965, Pakistani soldiers and guerrillas disguised as local residents infiltrated Kashmir and attempted to spark an uprising against India; this triggered another war, which ended

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inconclusively after the United Nations mandated a cease-fire. Six years later, in 1971, Pakistan suffered a territorial loss of its own when it failed to quell an uprising by its Bengali-speaking population in what was then East Pakistan. The movement, backed by Indian forces, culminated in the creation of Bangladesh as a new country.

The dismemberment — with its imagery of Pakistani troops surrendering to the Indian Army in Dhaka, the East Pakistani city that became the capital of Bangladesh — left a deep wound in Pakistan's psyche, one that time has not easily healed. The national idea, of Islam as a holy glue binding its people together, had once again come undone: the Bengalis who carved a new country out of Pakistan were predominantly Muslim. Accepting such a defeat to India was unimaginable for Pakistan's military leadership, which vowed revenge. On Dec. 17, 1971, the day after the surrender in Dhaka, the front page of the newspaper Dawn made no mention of it, instead running a banner headline that said: "War Till Victory."

Pakistan remained as determined as ever to cleave Kashmir from India. The defeat in 1971, however, drove home the realization that India, with its larger military and greater resources, could not be defeated in a conventional war. Husain Haqqani, who was Pakistan's ambassador to the United States from 2008 to 2011 and is now a senior fellow at Hudson Institute, told me this is what led Pakistan to adopt jihad — or the use of proxy warriors fighting in the name of Islam — as a strategy against India. "It is a paradigm of unconventional warfare," he said.

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence oversaw the recruitment and training of jihadists from Pakistan, Afghanistan and other Islamic countries to fight against Soviet troops. The Soviet Army's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, at the end of a decade-long war, was seen as a major victory for jihadi fighters and for the I.S.I., which came to view it as proof that jihad was viable as a military strategy. At the I.S.I.'s direction, according to Indian officials as well as Pakistani scholars, jihadi groups in Pakistan shifted their attention to a new, supposedly Islamic cause: liberating Kashmir from Indian rule. Their goal was to embolden Muslim separatists in Kashmir by carrying out terrorist attacks against India. A prominent group assigned to the task was the Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen, and one of its new members in 1989 was a bright 20-year-old son of a government schoolteacher who had graduated from a seminary in Karachi. His name was Masood Azhar.

THE HARKAT-UL-MUJAHEDEEN sent Azhar to train at a camp in Afghanistan. The instructors discovered that his physical capabilities didn't quite match his ideological fervor. Despite being in his early 20s, he was soft around the middle, not quite cut out for the rigors of jihadi boot camp. And so, after he was there for a week and learned the basics of firing a Kalashnikov, the trainers exempted him from the remainder of the 40-day course. Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen's leader decided that Azhar's talents would be better exploited in producing a monthly magazine on behalf of the organization called Sadai-e-Mujahid (Voice of the Mujahid).

With a print run of about 1,000, nearly all of which were distributed free at mosques, the magazine detailed the heroic accomplishments of the mujahedeen in Afghanistan, inspiring a reverence among mosque-goers that translated into a steady stream of new recruits for the group. And the publication of the group's bank account number in each issue helped bring in substantial donations every year. The magazine's success quickly propelled Azhar into Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen's leadership ranks. He was also proving himself to be a gifted orator. On trips to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Zambia and Britain, he delivered passionate speeches exhorting audiences at mosques and seminaries to do their part for jihad, which brought funds pouring into the group's coffers. An account of his British tour in the September 1993 issue of Sadai-e-Mujahid describes a series of sermons at mosques across Britain, with titles like "Virgins Yearn Badly for Martyrs."

By this time, Azhar had begun working directly on the cause in Kashmir, where India's efforts to crush a popular uprising through brute force were backfiring. Indian soldiers, seen by many in the Kashmir Valley as an occupying force, had been accused of large-scale abuses — rape, torture and, in some cases, disappearing men suspected of having links to militant groups. The brutalities left many seething. Azhar visited towns in Pakistan-administered Kashmir (also referred to as Azad Kashmir) to deliver public lectures urging young men to join the fight against Indian security forces across the Line of Control.

In 1994, Azhar, using a Portuguese passport, traveled to Srinagar and met with a militant commander in Kashmir named Sajjad Afghani,

Illustration by Karolis Strautniekas

a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan war. On Feb. 11, Azhar and Afghani were driving back from a meeting when their car ran out of gas. They hailed an auto-rickshaw to get to a gas station, but the vehicle was intercepted at an army checkpoint. Azhar and Afghani were sent to a prison in Jammu whose inmates included several Pakistani and Kashmiri militants.

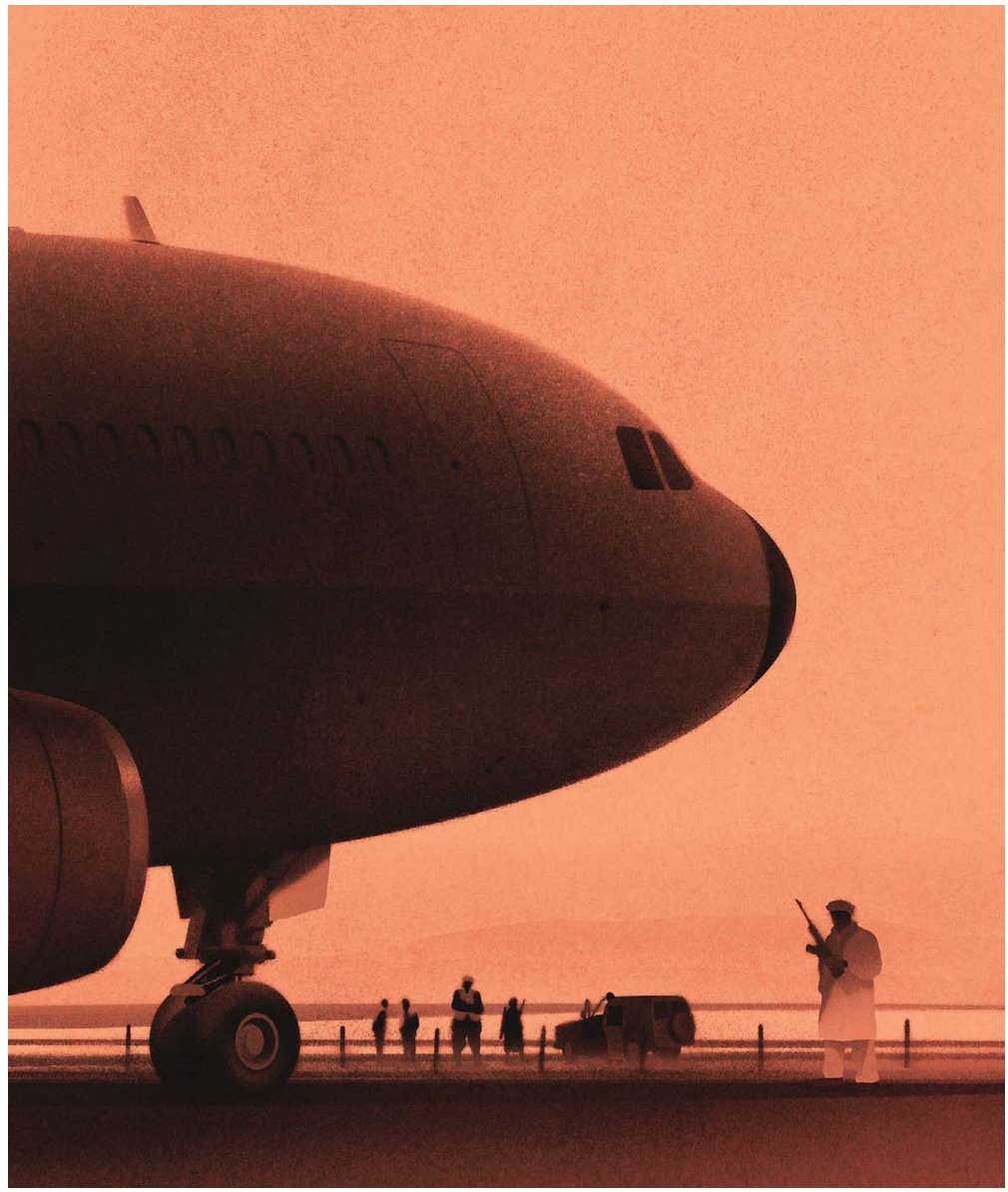
In prison, Azhar's preaching quickly gained him a following. A visitor who came to see him regularly was Avinash Mohananey, at the time a senior official in India's Intelligence Bureau. Last year in New Delhi, I met with Mohananey, who is now retired. He described Azhar as a pleasant conversationalist who was always cooperative. Once, after being slapped by an army official who had come to question him in prison, Azhar complained to Mohananey in language that, at least in Mohananey's view, suggested a desire for self-preservation at odds with Azhar's promotion of violent jihad. "Even my father has never slapped me," Mohananey recounted Azhar saying. When I heard that, I wondered if it wasn't more a reflection of wounded pride than an indication of cowardice.

Over the course of these conversations, Mohananey said, Azhar shared details that enabled Mohananey and his colleagues to learn how terrorist outfits in Pakistan were operating. The groups ran charity organizations that raised money from businesses as well as individuals — going door to door to ask people to donate hides from animals sacrificed for the religious festival of Eid, for instance, which were then auctioned. Only a small fraction of the funds raised was used for charity, he explained; a considerable part was spent on recruiting jihadists. Whenever a militant was killed by Indian security forces, Azhar told Mohananey, the organization's leaders would visit the family of the deceased and honor his memory in a public gathering.

One day, according to Mohananey, Azhar showed up later than usual for an interview at the prison. When Mohananey asked him about the delay, Azhar said he'd been distributing amulets to his followers in prison, who believed he had endowed them with supernatural powers. "Do you have those powers?" Mohananey asked, half in jest. Azhar laughed.

In November 1994, Afghani and other inmates at the Jammu prison attempted to win freedom for themselves and for Azhar by digging an escape tunnel. At one point, Azhar lowered himself into the hole in the cell floor to check out the progress. He promptly got stuck, he later admitted to prison officials. Before the tunnel could be completed, the plot was discovered.

Azhar's importance to the jihadists was made clear to Indian authorities in July 1995, when six Western tourists were kidnapped in Kashmir by a terrorist group named Al Faran. In exchange for the hostages, the group demanded the release of Azhar and 21 other jailed militants. The government refused. One hostage escaped; the beheaded body of another was found weeks later. The others were never found.



In June 1999, Afghani and his fellow inmates tried again to tunnel their way out; this bid, too, was foiled by prison authorities. Afghani died in the attempt, but Azhar's freedom lay just a few months ahead.

DEVI SHARAN POSSESSES an air of almost impenetrable calm, an asset when it comes to a career as an airline pilot. On the afternoon of Dec. 24, 1999, however, while captaining an Indian Airlines flight (IC-814), from Kathmandu to Delhi, Sharan was gripped by panic when a man wearing a red ski mask barged into the cockpit. In one hand, the man held a grenade; in the other, a revolver. "Don't make any moves," the armed man said, in Urdu, "or this aircraft gets blown up."

Sharan looked at the weapons, trying to discern if they were real or fake. As a student cadet in high school, he had seen guns and grenades up close. He was convinced that these were genuine.

"Fly west," the man instructed.

The plane was then cruising at 26,000 feet over Lucknow, in northern India. A second person, also wearing a ski mask, entered the cockpit. He saluted the first intruder, calling him "Chief."

"How much fuel do you have?" Chief asked.

"Let me read it on the instrument panel," Sharan replied.

"You can read it on the flight-engineer panel, too," the other man said. His use of the term "flight-engineer panel" suggested that the hijackers knew some aviation basics, Sharan realized, which meant it would be difficult to trick them.

"We have enough fuel to reach Delhi," Sharan said.

"What's your alternate?" the second hijacker asked.

"Bombay," Sharan said. Surely, then, the plane could fly to Lahore, Pakistan, the chief hijacker argued — after all, it was closer.

Sharan insisted that it couldn't. "The first thing on my mind was to not leave Indian

Illustration by Karolis Strautniekas

territory, using any means possible," he told me recently.

By now, Sharan had learned that there were five hijackers in all, brandishing five grenades and four revolvers among them. Sharan and his flight engineer began pleading with the hijackers to let them land at the nearest airport, Amritsar, in the secret hope that Indian security forces would storm the plane once it was on the ground. The hijackers relented, and the aircraft touched down in Amritsar. Sharan made a request for refueling, asking the airport staff to station the fuel tanker right in front of the aircraft, which he hoped would block the plane from taking off. But the minutes ticked by with no sign of a fuel truck. Enraged by the delay, one hijacker stabbed Rupin Katyal, a young businessman who was returning home with his wife after honeymooning in Kathmandu.

They forced Sharan to take off without refueling and fly toward Lahore. After refueling there, the hijackers had Sharan fly to Dubai, where they offloaded the body of Katyal, who had bled to death, and 27 other passengers. They ordered Sharan to take off again, this time for Kabul, but Kabul's air traffic control directed the plane to Kandahar, the second-largest city in Afghanistan. The country was under Taliban rule.

Early on Christmas morning, the aircraft landed at Kandahar. As the plane came to a stop, Sharan saw an open jeep driving toward it, carrying half a dozen guards armed with rocket launchers and guns. The men waved at the cockpit, and the chief hijacker and his deputy waved back. Sharan concluded that the terrorists on the plane had the support of the Taliban regime. Following the air traffic controller's instructions, he taxied behind the jeep and parked the aircraft in front of the international terminal.

About 48 hours later, a team of negotiators flew in from New Delhi. The hijackers wanted the Indian government to release 36 terrorists who were in Indian custody; Azhar was first on the list. In addition, they wanted the remains of Sajjad Afghani — Azhar's fellow inmate, who died in the attempted jailbreak in Jammu — and $200 million in cash.

The Indian negotiators were led by Ajit Doval, from the Intelligence Bureau, an ex-spy who previously worked undercover in Pakistan, and C. D. Sahay, a senior officer from the Research and Analysis Wing, India's equivalent of the C.I.A. From a room in the airport lounge, they radioed with air traffic control, which relayed messages between them and the hijackers. For obvious reasons, the talks were heavily tilted in favor of the hijackers: "They were ready to die," A. R. Ghanashyam, a diplomat who was part of the team, told me. "We were not ready to die. We wanted to save the passengers."

Over the course of the negotiations, Sahay told me recently, he and the rest of his team became convinced that the hijackers weren't acting alone, but rather were taking direction from Pakistani intelligence. A courteous man with a baritone voice, Sahay retired as chief of the Research and Analysis Wing in 2005 and is now a senior fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation in New Delhi. He claimed there were officials from the I.S.I. sitting in the control tower, serving as intermediaries. "Everything that was discussed and even marginally agreed to used to be reviewed in the back room on the other side," he told me. "The negotiation was going on between the I.S.I. and us — simple as that."

One by one, the team whittled down the list of terrorists whom the hijackers wanted released. As the negotiations dragged on, with news of advances and setbacks filtering back to the cabin, the hostages oscillated between hope and despair. The airport staff had been supplying meager rations of Kandahari naan and other food to the airplane, but after days of captivity, many of the more than 140 passengers had given up eating and drinking because they were afraid of having to use the overflowing toilets. The cabin crew quietly sidled up to those seated by the aircraft doors and whispered instructions to them on how the doors had to be opened in case the hijackers began killing people.

On Dec. 30, six days into the ordeal, the hijackers agreed to free the passengers and crew in exchange for three inmates: Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a British national in jail for a 1994 kidnapping of Western tourists in Kashmir; Mushtaq Zargar, a Kashmiri militant; and Masood Azhar. "The main objective was to secure Masood Azhar, that was nonnegotiable," Sahay told me. Indian investigators would eventually learn that one of the hijackers was Azhar's own brother, Ibrahim.

The next day, India's foreign minister, Jaswant Singh, flew in from Delhi with the three prisoners, who were driven across the tarmac to the hijacked airplane. The hijackers lowered a ladder from the cockpit and descended. Then, in full view of camera crews from around the world, the five masked men and the terrorists they had managed to free drove away in a convoy. Doval and Sahay and the rest of India were left with a haunting memory: the image of those vehicles speeding away from the airport against the rugged backdrop of the Kandahar mountains.

THE PAKISTANI MEDIA COVERAGE of the hijacking and prisoner exchange transformed Azhar from an obscure radical into a household name. Within weeks of his return, he was making public speeches across Pakistan to drum up support for jihad in Kashmir. Ayesha Siddiqa, who served in the Pakistani military and is now a researcher at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, told me she was shopping at Liberty Market in Lahore one day when she saw a group of men going around with a megaphone announcing a lecture by Azhar. "The middle class, the shopkeepers — they were excited by it," she said.

Most Pakistanis had never heard of Azhar before; now many saw him as an inspirational figure who had been freed from illegitimate captivity in India through a daring rescue operation. "Nobody except a few thought it was problematic to give somebody who had been released like this a hero's welcome," Siddiqa told me. Azhar would later write that the hijacking had avenged Pakistan's defeat in the 1971 war.

Azhar founded Jaish-e-Mohammad in March 2000, announcing its start at a large gathering at a stadium in Bahawalpur, a city in Pakistan's Punjab Province. Charismatic and somewhat cherubic in appearance, and wearing glasses that conferred a cerebral air, he exhorted the attendees to commit themselves to jihad against India. He set up a headquarters for Jaish at a seminary in the heart of Bahawalpur, in a neighborhood called Kausar Colony, next to an orthopedic hospital and across the street from a row of popular wedding halls.

From Jaish's early days, Siddiqa told me, it was clear to residents of Bahawalpur that the group had state support, as acknowledged years later by Musharraf. Siddiqa, a former civil servant who became the first woman to serve as director of naval research in Pakistan before switching to academic research, developed a special interest in Azhar and Jaish because of her own roots near Bahawalpur. "I've spoken to people there — they talk about trucks coming in the middle of the night to the Jaish headquarters and weapons being offloaded," she said. Once, after the Bahawalpur Police arrested some Jaish members for having hijacked a bus, the I.S.I. intervened to have the men freed.

Soon after its founding, Jaish struck with a suicide bombing outside an Indian Army facility in Badami Bagh, Jammu and Kashmir, on April 19, which injured four army personnel and three civilians. On Oct. 1, 2001, while the world's attention was focused on Al Qaeda, a car loaded with explosives rammed into the gates of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, after which two gunmen entered the Assembly building and began shooting. Jaish claimed responsibility for the strike, which killed 38 people. Then, on Dec. 13, 2001, five assailants executed a similarly audacious attack on India's Parliament in New Delhi, killing nine people. Indian investigators found that Jaish had orchestrated the attack, in concert with another Pakistani terrorist group, the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The Parliament attack drew international attention to Jaish, compelling the Pakistani government to ban the organization and place Azhar under house arrest. But no formal charges were brought against him, and the house arrest was lifted after a year. Although it had been declared a terrorist organization by the United Nations and had been banned by Pakistani authorities, Jaish continued to raise funds and recruit young men. In an interview given to the Pakistani broadcast journalist Nadeem Malik last year, Pervez Musharraf — Pakistan's

president from 2001 to 2008 — admitted that Pakistani intelligence used Jaish to orchestrate bombings in India. He said he always considered Jaish a terrorist organization and had even pushed to act against it, but he clarified that he didn't insist — seeming to support the popular belief that Pakistan's civilian government lacks meaningful control over Pakistan's Army. And so, Musharraf went on to say in the interview, Jaish was allowed to operate even after it attempted to assassinate him in 2003, in reaction to his support of the United States in the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Siddiqa, who has interviewed a number of Jaish members, told me that Jaish had close links with Al Qaeda from its inception and received early funding from Osama bin Laden, money that it used to take over seminaries and training camps outside Bahawalpur. Inside the city, Jaish expanded its headquarters by buying up adjacent plots of land and adding new buildings to the compound. According to a 2007 dossier prepared by the Bahawalpur Police that Siddiqa has studied, the site includes residential quarters for housing students and fedayeen.

The compound is also where Azhar's entire clan lives, including the families of his brothers and sisters. Nearly all of his brothers and brothers-in-law are involved in running Jaish, making it a family-owned enterprise, Siddiqa told me. The family has undisputed control over the organization's finances. As a vehicle for gaining wealth and power, it has been a spectacular success. Siddiqa said, "At one point, their father owned almost nothing, and now they have these properties and much more."

After an attack in Srinagar in 2006, Jaish dropped out of the headlines, although Azhar was continuing to deliver sermons to inspire jihadis. David Headley, a U.S. citizen who helped plan the Mumbai terror attacks of 2008, carried out by the Lashkar-e-Taiba, told Indian investigators that he had been deeply influenced by Azhar's speeches at a mosque he attended in Pakistan. Azhar disappeared from public view in the wake of the Mumbai attacks, which once again brought Pakistan's apparent support for terrorism under intense international scrutiny. Yet, by September 2009, Jaish was building a large facility on the outskirts of Bahawalpur surrounded by a high wall, with a tiled swimming pool and a horse stable. Then, in 2014, a prerecorded speech by Azhar was aired at an anti-India march in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, signaling to India that he was back to plotting violence.

Jaish struck not long after that. In the early hours of Jan. 1, 2016, four Jaish operatives armed with Kalashnikovs and grenades attacked an air base in Pathankot, a city in Punjab about 15 miles from the Pakistan border. They killed seven Indian Air Force and security personnel before being shot. Among the evidence that Indian investigators gave to Pakistan to prove that the attack had emanated from Pakistani soil were intercepts of phone conversations between the group's commander, a young man named Nasir, and his mother in Sialkot, Pakistan, in the hours before the gun battle. Thanks to her prayers, he said, Allah had helped him and his men in wondrous ways to get to this point in their mission. "Don't cry, Mother," he said. "Your son is embracing death, and you're weeping?"

THE MAN WHO has served as India's national-security adviser under Prime Minister Narendra Modi happens to be Ajit Doval, who led the Indian government's negotiations with the hijackers of IC-814. Doval hasn't given interviews in recent years, but in a speech he delivered at a university a few months before ascending to his current position, in February 2014, he laid out a doctrine of "offensive defense" for countering terrorism emanating from Pakistan, which is the opposite of the position India had to take during the crisis in Kandahar. "You know, we engage an enemy in three modes," he told his audience. One is "defensive offense," he explained, in which guards and soldiers strike only when their territory is attacked. "The second is offensive defense, where we will go to the place from where the offense is coming. And third is the offensive mode, where you go outright."

For years, India had battled Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in the defensive mode, Doval said, but it wasn't good enough: "You throw 100 stones at me, I stop 90, still 10 hurt me. And I can never win." What India needed to do instead, he argued, was switch to "offensive defense," which meant striking at Pakistan's vulnerabilities in anticipation of the country's hostile intentions. Once Pakistan realized that India had shifted its stance, Doval told the audience, the country would be deterred from continuing to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy because of the costs inflicted on it.

The Indian government's decision to send fighter planes into Pakistan days after the Pulwama attack in February 2019 reflects the new doctrine Doval has pushed. "The choice of target for India was a difficult task, because there are a lot of Jaish-e-Mohammad camps in heavily populated areas like Bahawalpur," a senior official in India's Ministry of External Affairs told me. "Then our planners identified this training camp that was located on a hilltop adjoining a forested area where a congregation of trainees and trainers and commanders was taking place." Within hours of the strike on the site, which Indian officials said was under the charge of Azhar's brother-in-law, Yusuf Azhar, a statement from the foreign secretary said that "a very large number" of terrorists and others had been "eliminated." Whether the strike caused casualties remains in doubt, though, absent any supporting evidence from India. The Pakistan government denies that anybody was killed, although it barred foreign journalists from visiting the site for more than a month, eventually taking some on a restricted tour of the site, where they found no proof of damage.

Indian officials say the message that has been delivered to Pakistan is more important than an accounting of how many terrorists were killed. "The purpose of the strike has been served," Pankaj Saran, India's deputy national-security adviser told me. Until now, he said, terrorist groups created by Pakistan to fight a proxy war against India believed they had immunity within Pakistan's boundaries. That would no longer be the case, Saran said. "If there is loss of Indian life that is traced back to Pakistan — I'm not saying we will not hesitate — I'm saying we may not hesitate in striking at the source."

Haqqani, the former Pakistani ambassador to the United States, described the strike on Balakot as an attempt to disrupt the paradigm that Pakistan has operated under all these years. For Pakistan's military, he said, the use of jihadi groups like Jaish had been a way to wound India without risk, because it believed that India would be unwilling to retaliate militarily, fearing the threat of a nuclear attack. What India has now signaled, Haqqani told me, was: "No, you cannot have the comfort of having a subconventional option without conventional retaliation. We may actually have found a sweet spot where we can hit you without creating circumstances in which you will escalate to the nuclear level."

The increased tensions between India and Pakistan following the airstrike drew fresh attention to a diplomatic effort, begun by India in 2009, to have Azhar sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council. China, one of the five permanent members of the Security Council and a close ally of Pakistan's, blocked the attempt on three occasions in the past, arguing that even though Azhar founded Jaish in 2000, there was no reason to believe he was still active. After the Pulwama attack last year, Syed Akbaruddin, India's ambassador to the United Nations, submitted to the sanctions committee audio clips of speeches that Azhar had made in the days before and after the attack. In a speech on Feb. 16, two days after the suicide bombing, Azhar warned that if India did not surrender Kashmir, the flames of jihad would spread across the country. "He's the epitome of a violent extremist, instigating terrorism by words," Akbaruddin told me.

China changed its position: On May 1, the Security Council put Azhar on its sanctions list, obligating the Pakistani government to freeze his assets, prevent him from acquiring arms and ban him from traveling. But as of now, it's unclear if any of these steps have been taken.

In March 2019, a week after the aerial strikes, Pakistan's Interior Ministry claimed that it had taken 44 members of Jaish (including two of Azhar's relatives) and other banned groups into preventive custody. The government has also taken control of mosques, seminaries and hospitals run by Jaish. The compound in the heart of Bahawalpur as well as the more recently built headquarters on the northern outskirts of the

city have police and paramilitary troops guarding them. Pakistan's prime minister, Imran Khan, recently acknowledged that the Pakistan Army had tolerated and even created terrorist groups in the past but was now determined to disband them. "We have decided, for the future of our country — forget the outside pressure — we will not allow armed militias to operate anymore," he said in a meeting with foreign journalists in Islamabad last April. The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force, a monitoring group, is pressing Pakistan to comply with a plan to curb terrorism financing and money laundering; otherwise, the country risks being put on a blacklist that would further impair its ailing economy. In what optimists might regard as a sign of sincerity, a Pakistani court last month sentenced Hafiz Saeed — head of Lashkar-e-Taiba, which masterminded the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks — to five and a half years in prison.

Azhar's whereabouts is not publicly known, although Pakistan's foreign minister said in spring last year that Azhar was ill. He is believed to be suffering from a kidney ailment. When I visited the Pakistan Embassy in Washington in March 2019 to discuss my request for a visa to report this story, the press minister, Abid Saeed, told me that Azhar was in the hospital. I remarked that it would then be convenient for me to meet with him when I went to Pakistan. He let out a laugh while escorting me out of the building. "Well, now you are asking for the moon," he said. I never did receive a visa, and the embassy never responded to my questions about the specific actions Pakistan was planning to take against Azhar and the hijackers of IC-814.

I asked Siddiqa and Haqqani whether to take at face value Imran Khan's assertion that Pakistan was determined to shut down groups like Jaish. The answer hardly mattered, they told me, because it was Pakistan's military, and not the civilian government, that was the real decider of foreign policy. C. Christine Fair, a professor of security studies at Georgetown University, was just as skeptical. "They have an army that wants to redraw maps — an army that can't win wars," she told me. "These jihadi groups are the only tools they have. There's zero, zero, zero chance that they will give up assets like Masood Azhar."

India's revoking of Kashmir's autonomy is bound to be seen by Pakistan's military as a strategic defeat, one that I.S.I. will be plotting to avenge. An Indian intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told me that Indian security forces were bracing for a terrorist strike in the days following the Kashmir announcement. "The question was not if there will be an attack, the question was when," he said. According to Indian intelligence reports, Jaish has reopened terrorist training camps along the border in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which India refers to as Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. "Masood Azhar's brother has been mobilized," the official told me, "to lead the effort on behalf of Jaish for eventual retaliation."

The partition and its bloody aftermath set the stage for decades of conflict between two newly born sovereign states, and few of the consequences have been as devastating as those inflicted upon Kashmir. It's tempting to look back and ask what could have been done differently to alter its fate — what the Indian government could have done to forestall the separatist movement in the valley; what the international community could have done to dissuade the Pakistani Army from sponsoring terrorist attacks; and, in the narrower context of the hijacking of IC-814, what Indian security personnel might have done to stop the airplane from taking off from Amritsar, as the pilot hoped for.

A year after the two countries were brought to the edge of war by a terrorist attack, the more consequential questions are about how the actions of today might shape the future. Will India's new policy of striking terrorist camps in Pakistan truly deter the Pakistani Army's use of cross-border terrorism? Will India's tightened grip over Kashmir really improve the lot of Kashmiris, as Narendra Modi claims? Or will these measures only lead to more violence? ◆

Sanders

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he could assemble a solid liberal coalition: young voters, as he had already demonstrated in 2016; Latinos, who had not been particularly animated by Clinton's immigration-centric appeals; and, as the fruit of relentless lobbying since his disappointing performance the previous cycle, a sizable following of African-Americans. Sanders also maintained that he alone could appeal to the blue-collar workers who, going back to his days governing Burlington, had been his original base.

"I was born into the white working class, all right?" Sanders told me. "And one of the very sad things that has happened, and this has been statistically demonstrated, is, unbelievably, that the Democratic Party has become the party of the more affluent people, while the Republican Party has become the party of the white working class."

But Sanders wasn't simply a bystander to those shifting allegiances. During his time as mayor, demonstrators threatened to shut down Burlington's G.E. plant, which manufactured Gatling-style guns being shipped by the U.S. to fight leftists in Central America. But the plant also employed hundreds of union workers. Sanders sided with the workers. Today, Sanders was calling for a ban on fracking as a crucial plank in his Green New Deal. Tens of thousands of jobs would be lost — many of which happened to be in the western part of Pennsylvania, a swing state that was vital for a Democratic victory in November.

"Anytime you're honest and have to make difficult decisions, you're going to lose some support," he said. "I understand that. But on the issue of climate change, it's totally irresponsible for any candidate to deny the reality of what we're facing." Sanders added that he had seven grandchildren and that workers in the fossil-fuel industry had kids, too. Besides, he maintained, the union workers knew full well that they "are not my enemy" — and that by providing them with five years of paid retraining, as well as free education and health care, "we'll protect them."

But the conundrum Sanders now found himself in with blue-collar voters was of his own making. In 2016, he attracted many of them with a relentless message of economic reform. For this cycle, the candidate chose to run on an all-encompassing "movement" platform with key components — gun control, liberalization of immigration policy and that ban on fracking — that risked raising questions among the white working class as to whether Sanders would, in fact, "protect them."

This proved to be the first crack to appear in what Sanders saw as his wall. In Iowa, the rural counties went for Buttigieg. The low overall turnout in that overwhelmingly white state was, as Shakir put it, "worrisome for the entire field" — but especially so for Sanders, who had vowed that young people would turn out in "unprecedented" numbers. A week later in New Hampshire, the voting tallies were more reassuring, but Sanders could not credibly boast that he was chiefly responsible for them, because he won by a little more than one percentage point. Even in Nevada, where Sanders took 53 percent of the Latino vote, there was reason to question whether history really was being made by his campaign: Overall Democratic turnout reached 100,000 with the help of a new early-voting provision that did not exist in the Obama-Clinton face-off of 2008, when turnout nonetheless hit 116,000.

Sanders allowed that he had failed to connect with voters of color in 2016. "My state has a very small African-American community," he told me in Bakersfield. "We have a very small Latino population in Vermont. So, you learn." In fact, the Sanders campaign learned very little about how to win over black voters in South Carolina. His team would insist that they had never expected to win there — too conservative, too small a youth population — but early on, they believed they could cut into Biden's margin. Doing so, however, would have required a yearlong effort to recast Biden as an antibusing and pro-incarceration senator who had previously advocated cuts in Social Security — and to target this message to African-Americans who might not be aware of the vice president's record. But

Sanders, ever skeptical of pollsters and reluctant to go on the attack, would not approve a research budget for such an effort.

One of Sanders's black surrogates in South Carolina, Ivory Thigpen, a pastor and state representative, told me 10 days after the primary that Biden had vulnerabilities. "I remember having conversations with many of my congregants who would say, 'I don't know, the vice president seems kind of shaky,'" Thigpen said. But, he added, the Sanders campaign did not exploit those concerns with ads focusing on Biden's record on, for example, Social Security. "I don't think that was ever a topic of discussion," he said. "I do think it could've moved the needle some."

Instead, African-American voters were left to focus on Sanders's sweeping agenda. "One of the things you have to take into consideration with the older generation is that they don't want things to change," Thigpen said. "I remember one individual who literally said to me: 'My Medicare isn't for all. I worked for it; it's mine. And now you want to give it away to someone else who hadn't earned it.'"

Biden took 61 percent of South Carolina's black vote, won in a landslide and seized the momentum from Sanders. Over the next two days, Buttigieg and Klobuchar — nearly out of cash, with no support of their own from voters of color and now seeing Biden as a viable moderate for the first time — quit the race and threw their support to him on the eve of Super Tuesday. Their withdrawal from the campaign exposed Sanders's underlying weakness: His electoral floor and his ceiling were essentially one and the same. As a result, he could prosper only in a field that was overcrowded with moderate candidates. "Had they not dropped out," Ben Tulchin, his pollster, told me, "we would've continued to win with a 30 percent share of the vote. We would've won Minnesota, Maine, Massachusetts and probably Texas. That's seven primaries we would've taken. The story would have been totally different."

Instead, the story of Super Tuesday was that the party was rallying around Biden as the likeliest Democrat to defeat Trump. Many of his victories on March 3 occurred with far less ad spending and field organizing than Sanders had devoted. For Sanders, the problem wasn't a mismatch in resources owing to the dark-hearted connivances of the 1 percent. The problem was the 99 percent. A majority of them had turned away from their leftmost option, just as they did in the 2018 midterms, when a wave of Democratic voters rejected progressives running in battleground districts. Replacing Trump, it seemed, was all the revolution most Democrats wanted.

Just after Klobuchar and Buttigieg suspended their presidential campaigns and, along with the former candidate Beto O'Rourke, announced their support of Biden in early March, Shakir valiantly spun the news to me as a sign of Sanders's strength. "Quite frankly, I see fear and panic in the establishment," the campaign manager said. "They wouldn't be doing this if they didn't think Bernie Sanders was on a path to winning the nomination and in fact the presidency. And I think those who are accustomed to having and enjoying power might see this as a threat to them."

Shakir did not seem to think these developments represented honest concerns about having a democratic socialist at the top of the ticket. Like his boss, the campaign manager believed that this was solely about the establishment's determination to install a protector of the status quo. He insisted to me that Team Bernie was in fact delighted to see it come down to their boss versus Biden — "a perfect foil," he maintained. "Because they lived through the same moments together, saw the same information, saw the Iraq war, the bankruptcy bill, the balanced-budget bill that tried to cut Social Security, the same trade deals. And one person voted the right side of history and the other the wrong side. And when you vote, judgment is the most important factor."

But now the Sanders campaign was confronting the judgment of voters: Biden had a center-left coalition (including the allegiance of the party's crucial black constituency) that seemed capable of prevailing in a general election, while the Sanders movement relied on young voters who weren't coming out all that abundantly in February and March and therefore couldn't be counted on to produce a record turnout in November. Precisely because he had come so far — from "Who the hell is Bernie?" to "How the hell do we stop Bernie?"— the gale force of the post-Super Tuesday "Stop Bernie" movement felt, to Bernie and Jane Sanders, far more brutal than it did during the previous cycle. This was not really about wanting to unseat Trump, in the Sanderses' view. This was about shutting down Sanders's anti-establishment critique. Little seemed to have changed since the spring of 2015, when Hillary Clinton's upstart challenger was told by his aides that he might not be able to get on the ballot for the New Hampshire primary because of an obscure provision stating that only registered party members could do so. His muttered reply to a campaign aide then could apply now: "[Expletive] Democrats."

"The only reason Bernie's in this race," Jane Sanders told me in early February, "is because we think he's the best chance to defeat Trump." Sanders himself acknowledged this foremost priority the day after his electoral firewall collapsed in Michigan — and then added, with a degree of candor that was remarkable even for him, that millions of Democratic voters across the nation happened to disagree that he represented the best chance of doing so.

Sanders concluded his brief remarks to the press that Wednesday afternoon by enumerating questions he intended to ask "my friend Joe Biden" at their first and only one-on-one debate four days later. It was a signal that Sanders intended for his legacy to be not a kamikaze mission but instead something more fruitful for the party that was never his. In 2016, Sanders proved he could energize a new generation of voters. During this cycle, he found a way to organize and communicate effectively with Latinos — evidenced not only in Nevada and California but also along the border in Texas, where his delegate share came to just nine shy of Biden's. That accomplishment is no cheap trick. Should Biden, the probably nominee, combine his gains in the Dallas and Houston suburbs with his former rival's organizational superiority near the Mexican border, Texas could flip to the Democrats for the first time since 1976.

In defeat, Sanders has prompted a reckoning within the Democratic Party. He has forced upon it an airing of ideological differences, compelling progressives and moderates to choose their leader and then make the case in public. Since the rise of the Tea Party, self-described "principled conservatives" like Senators Ted Cruz and Tom Cotton have claimed that they, too, yearn for such a debate with the Republican Party's center-right establishment, only to opt for Trumpism instead. Even as the two-man race has taken a more pugilistic turn while the economy reels and a pandemic sweeps the globe, Sanders has remained steadfast in his willingness to let the Democratic voters judge him by his democratic-socialist vision of what America should be. And so, it would seem, they have.

"It's never been about only winning the election," Jane Sanders told me in February, back when victory was a distinct possibility. "I mean, if you won just because you were the one with the superior campaign strategies, that would not be terribly satisfying in the end. It's much more satisfying to pick up the paper, go online or watch TV and see town halls of people questioning their senators about Medicare for All from a more informed point of view, using facts rather than vitriol. That's been so moving to see, really. So gratifying."

The notion that political change and electoral victory were often two different things — that the former could and did occur without the latter — has been an essential tenet of Sanders's underdog career. On the day after Elizabeth Warren announced that she was suspending her campaign, the Vermont senator held a news conference. He wore his navy blazer and a matching tie, an implicit show of respect for the vanquished; and though he took handwritten notes to the lectern, he barely glanced at them, instead gazing reflectively at no one in particular. He observed that many politicians "fade away" as their losing campaigns do. This would not be Warren's fate, he said. Then he explained why: "She has changed political consciousness in America — which, at the end of the day, is the most important thing that any candidate could do." ◆

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Melanie after a pause, and she took notes as I described it.

Before I left, Melanie asked if I still wanted to name the person we thought was behind the accusations. I told her I was worried that if she contacted him, things might escalate. But I also couldn't think of anything else to do. I said yes.

That weekend, we went camping. We needed to do something normal. We needed to stop looking at our email, waiting for the next shoe to drop, the gun to go off.

The day before we left, we filed what is known as a "John Doe" lawsuit. The lawyer we had hired explained that the suit would allow us to subpoena identifying information associated with the emails used in the accusations and the Reddit posts, and once we had that proof, we could directly sue whoever owned those email addresses.

I also blocked J. on social media. I worried it might tip him off, but I couldn't stand the thought of him having access to my life, to pictures of my kids.

We left town early Saturday, and as we drove into the mountains, I tried to stop going over the case in my head the way I had been doing for the past couple of weeks, like a mouse on a wheel, searching for a way off.

We got to Prescott by midmorning and found a spot overlooking a pine forest bordered by a stream. On a hike later that afternoon, F. tramped through brush and over rocks without complaints, and N. led us with a walking stick clutched in her fist. I realized I was finally thinking about something else, like how good a sudden breeze felt on my skin after sweating through my shirt, like F.'s dimpled legs moving so fast through the brush, like the sound of water falling somewhere we couldn't yet see.

Afterward, Marta dropped F. and me off at the tent for a nap while she and N. went to buy marshmallows in town. I read F. a book in the tent and sang her a song, and then I looked at my phone and saw a text from a friend: "He's stalking you on social media." J. had apparently been asking friends we had in common to check if I was still on Facebook and Twitter. He wanted to know if I had blocked him or just closed my accounts.

A few minutes later, he texted me himself. This despite the fact that I hadn't responded to any of his recent texts. Not the one in all caps the day the Reddit posts went up. Not the one the following Monday asking if I was going to that writers' conference. Nor the one a couple of days before, which read, "How are you holding up, friend?" And I didn't answer his final one either.

"I'm genuinely sorry if communicating with you made you uncomfortable," he wrote. "I had hoped admitting to the awkwardness of the situation would make everything OK. I guess I was wrong, and I apologize."

F. moved around in the mound of sleeping bags, still not asleep. I felt sick. Part of me wondered if I was wrong. But mostly, I knew he was responsible and was scared by how easily he could lie to me directly — and by what he might do next.

My biggest fear — one I told no one but thought about every day — was that J. would call in a fake child-abuse accusation against us. Sometimes the fear would come out of nowhere. I'd be watching N. draw a picture of a sun behind a mountain made out of a coffee filter, and suddenly it would be there. The knock on the door. The woman introducing herself to us. The panic as we tried to reach our lawyer. Some days I could almost smell the caseworker's perfume, hear her polite request to interview each child separately, alone in a room where we weren't. I thought about our house. All the toys we hadn't found time to pick up. The smell of F.'s last diaper in the kitchen trash can. The bruise on her knee from falling down at day care. I thought about a line in the email from "Jessica," how she wrote that she felt powerless.

I put away my phone and gave F. a hand to hold, but neither of us could fall asleep.

When we got back in town, Melanie wrote to ask for another meeting. Again, she had new information, and again, we hoped that meant she was closing the case. Instead, she said that she'd been able to talk to Michigan, and they had sent her all the emails they'd received.

"Emails?" I thought. We had assumed there was just one.

Melanie told us that she had put them in date order, and she would go through them and then we could talk. She sounded more tired than she had in our previous interviews, and I realized this was probably wearing her down too. The constant bombardment of information. The feeling that none of it made sense.

But she never said as much. It seemed clear she was beginning to believe us, but she also kept reminding us that she couldn't close the investigation until she had "examined all of the information." That included talking to Michigan; it included interviewing Marta's students and colleagues, and mine as well; and now it also included an upcoming appointment to talk with "Jessica," who had recently emailed that she was willing to meet with Melanie in person — but not until the following week.

"I assure you I'm doing all I can to wrap this up as quickly as possible," Melanie had written to us when we once again asked her about the timeline. And perhaps in testament to that fact, she had asked us to come meet with her that day — and she had received permission from the university's lawyers to share the stack of emails on the table before her.

The first few emails, she told us, had been sent from the same email address used to file the original accusation against Marta, the one ostensibly from a student named Rebecca James. Only this time, the author claimed to be a colleague of Marta's named R. Orlich. She told the associate dean at Michigan that she was reaching out because she had heard that Marta was being considered for a spousal hire. "I wanted to make you aware, especially in this moment of reconciliation for folks who abuse their positions, that we are investigating three credible allegations against her putting students in sexually abusive and compromising situations." The email was sent on March 6 — the day after J. first texted me about the job.

Less than a week later, "R. Orlich" emailed again to say that two new students had come forward. "ASU will likely settle the case quietly," she wrote, "but you should be aware, I believe as someone who believes in the university as a safe space for people to learn and grow, that Marta's behavior has been abhorrent and completely unacceptable."

After that, the remaining emails came from "Jessica P. Newman," Marta's supposed graduate student. These emails were sent to the same department chair with whom I had been communicating about the job. "Dr. Cabrero should not be working with students, and I shudder at the thought that this problem will leap from university to university," the first one read. "It is, I have now found out through a graduate colleague, why she left her previous university as well — the sexual manipulation of students under the guise of mentorship."

Subsequent emails from "Jessica" included screenshots of the Reddit posts, a screenshot of a supposed email between Marta's colleagues discussing her removal from a dissertation committee "given the recent investigation into Dr. Cabrero's relationship with students in our program" and a warning that both The New York Times and The Chronicle of Higher Education would most likely be coming out with articles about Marta's supposed history of abuse soon.

Rereading the emails later, I could see how they capitalized on real weaknesses in academia: the way that harassers are often passed on between institutions, the fact that graduate students have so few rights — and are so dependent on their faculty mentors — that they fear going public with stories of abuse and then all the other realities that have come to light with #MeToo, realities that have been lived experiences for both Marta and me, and for most women we know.

But at the time of that meeting with Melanie, as she read parts of each email aloud to us and waited for us to react, what I felt was stunned — at the audacity and expansiveness of this whole story that had been written, and believed, for

weeks about Marta, and me, all without either of us ever knowing.

"The reason that I contacted you," Melanie eventually said, "is because I got another email from Michigan today." The email, she told us, was titled "Text Tonight," and in it, "Jessica" wrote, "I am turning this over to the authorities and wanted your administration to have this text message from Marta as well."

Melanie then read out loud what she said was a screenshot of a text between Marta and "Jessica":

> "Marta: Jessica, we need to talk
>
> Jessica: Please stop contacting me. All communication needs to be processed through the Title IX coordinator, as you know.
>
> Marta: We will ruin your career. I will make sure you never get a job once your dissertation is done. My wife and I are well-connected."

Marta exhaled loudly. I held my breath.

"I know," Melanie eventually said. "I understand." She told us that she had checked several key facts and disproved them one by one: There is a Professor Orlich in Marta's department, but she hadn't sent any emails to Michigan. Marta's colleagues also denied emailing about her and said she had never been taken off a dissertation committee. And not only was there not an A.S.U. graduate student named "Rebecca James," there also wasn't any named "Jessica P. Newman."

I felt something tight in me release. "Does this mean," I asked, "at this point you can actually close the investigation?"

But Melanie shook her head. "Jessica," she reminded us, had scheduled that appointment with her to talk. And even though we now knew that "Jessica" didn't exist, Melanie said she still had an obligation to see if she showed up for the appointment she'd made.

I took the girls to school that Thursday, and when I got back home, Marta was outside pacing. She'd been calling me for the past half-hour, but I hadn't had my ringer on. "Melanie called again," she said, her voice flat.

"Jessica," it seemed, was now claiming that Marta had showed up at her apartment on Monday. "But we met with Melanie on Monday," I said, as if that were the least believable part of the whole scenario.

"Melanie said it was in the afternoon," Marta said. "We met with her in the morning, so now Melanie wants to know what I did that afternoon." She was shaking. "Sarah," she said. "I couldn't remember. I said I thought I was home working, but I really can't remember."

My first thought — and I still can't reckon with this — was doubt. We knew "Jessica" wasn't real, but I couldn't understand why Marta didn't remember where she was on Monday afternoon. That was only three days earlier.

I felt the stick of my sweat from the morning heat. I tried not to say anything critical. "My phone!" Marta said, suddenly breaking the silence. She pulled out her iPhone quickly, and began scrolling through the GPS data. After a minute, she found a little blue dot proving that she had, in fact, been inside our house that whole afternoon. Until about 4:30 p.m., when she went to get the kids. I felt my chest release. But below that lay shame. Why did I believe her only once her phone told me she wasn't lying?

What Marta didn't tell me until later was that Melanie had also asked her about an email that "Jessica" claimed Marta had sent her that same week. Again, "Jessica" had sent a screenshot of the email instead of the email itself. "You wanted to sleep with us, or at least that is what your body was saying," Marta supposedly wrote. "In Spain this would never happen. People understand their bodies and desires there." It closed: "Be careful what you do. You need to text me back."

"Why didn't you tell me about that before?" I asked after Marta eventually summarized the email. My stomach tightened again. Marta shook her head. We were walking the dog before going to pick up the girls that afternoon. She had been on the couch all day, almost comatose. "There are just too many things," she said.

On days like that — when I saw Marta destroyed or when I thought about all the real victims out there, afraid to come forward — I was angry at J. Other days I was scared of what he would do next. But I also worried about him too — even if everyone I knew told me I shouldn't.

Before I blocked him on social media, J. had posted a lot about being unhappy. Friends kept me updated on what he was saying or doing, and at times he seemed to be getting worse. He posted that he had an ulcer, that he was taking a mental health day, that his father was sick. Sometimes I feared that once we had the proof we needed, once all the bricks came tumbling down around him, he might hurt himself. What I hadn't remembered, though, is that sometimes when the house falls down, we move on and rebuild in other places, new structures made from the same materials but shaped to tell a different story.

Around the middle of April, J. learned about our lawsuit. That same day, he started telling people that he was being trolled online. Homophobic comments about him were posted on the subreddit for his university that afternoon, and an anonymous letter was sent to his university mailbox that read "Die fag professor" later that week. He even did a presentation about the harassment as part of a panel at his university on discrimination, subtext and the power of language. The audience was outraged and horrified.

"That's a classic horror-movie move!" a friend of mine said when I told her what was happening.

All the bricks came tumbling down, but they had been rebuilt into enough of a structure that the only way to prove his story false would be to go to court.

"The villain injures himself."

If J. were the villain, though, that meant we were the victims — and at some point, I realized we were. Later, I wondered why it took me so long to recognize that.

One reason, I think now, is because at the beginning of this story, we were given the role of perpetrators. I spent so much time trying to prove we were innocent that I didn't think to question the parameters of the narrative itself.

Once we began sharing what was happening to us with others, almost everyone we knew was aghast, horrified. They said they'd never heard of anything like this. But now I wonder how true that is. Think about so-called deepfakes, those women's faces being fastened on the bodies of porn stars and passed around. Think about the trolling and doxxing of women online. Our story is more akin to those tales than anything that has to do with Title IX. But because the narrative got started one way, it was hard for us, and even harder for academic institutions — who "must investigate all allegations of discrimination, harassment and retaliation," as an A.S.U. spokesman later told me — to change direction.

When I finally recognized that we were the ones being harassed, I wrote to Melanie and asked for help. She recommended that I contact the university's victims' advocate, who works with the police. I left a message explaining our situation and my fear. I never got a call back.

We also asked our lawyer about a restraining order, but he said we needed proof that the person we thought was harassing us really was harassing us. And we didn't have that yet — we were still waiting for the results of the subpoenas.

Eventually, I wrote to the president of A.S.U. He had told us during our faculty orientation that

we should always feel free to reach out directly to him, so I decided to take him at his word. I told him that someone had been using the university's Title IX process to harass us, that this person had impersonated students and faculty members and had posted false statements about Marta on Reddit. I explained that there was no evidence that either Marta or I had done anything wrong, yet the Title IX office had told us that it could not close its investigation if emails kept coming in from this anonymous individual. "We are strong believers in the importance of Title IX protections," I concluded, "but we also feel like there has to be a system in place to protect faculty and students from outsiders who might use that system to defame and harass."

That afternoon, I received a response from the vice provost, who assured me that investigators were being urged to move expeditiously. "I know it can be frustrating to wait for findings," she added, "but we are obligated to look into allegations that are brought to us."

Two weeks passed. We met with Melanie and her supervisor and were told that, in the future, anonymous accusations would be fact-checked before new investigations were opened. Melanie told us she had started writing up her report, but she said she couldn't give us a timeline for its completion. I wrote again to the vice provost. She said the report was now with the provost, and we could expect an answer soon.

The last weekend in April, we planned to drive up to the mountains again to camp with the girls. In the car that Friday evening, I checked my email from my phone and saw that the provost had written to us at 4:58 p.m. I read the email out loud to Marta as she drove. His determination letter found no credible evidence of a policy violation. "Respondents 1 and 2 are both highly regarded in their respective departments and both received much praise and adoration in their course evaluations from students," the letter concluded. "Both credibly denied all of the allegations against them."

Two days later, as we were rolling up our sleeping bags and folding the tent into neat triangles, I received the official offer letter from Michigan — two and a half months after that phone call telling me I had the job. We also got word that the job search for Marta had begun again. "It's over," I said.

"Or not," Marta didn't say. But she should have.

Our house was half packed when we received an email from our law firm with the first response to our subpoenas. It was for the email account used by both "Rebecca James" and "R. Orlich." The released information was a mere three pages, and we first thought it held nothing important. But just as Marta was walking away, I noticed a line indicating that the account had been verified and listing a phone number. "Marta," I said too loudly, "where's my phone?"

I was shaking as I tried to call up J.'s last message. I was nervous I would accidentally call him. I felt as if I was doing something wrong. But then, there it was: an exact match.

The account had been opened the same day J. first texted me about the job. His phone had been used to verify the account. And the I.P. address, when we checked, was from the town where he was living at the time. "We've got him," I said.

And for the smallest moment, it felt as if our story actually had come to an end. Because the way I wanted it all to end was like this: Marta would be offered a spousal hire at Michigan, and I would accept a dream job teaching creative nonfiction. We would find a cute Craftsman house in Ann Arbor in which to move the boxes that had been accumulating all around us. The kids would be happy, and so would we.

But also, J. would admit what he had done to us. He would pay our legal fees, and we would all agree to move on. Maybe he'd issue a public apology. Maybe there would be a moment of reckoning in which I could forgive him. Maybe he would even write a memoir about what an awful person he had been.

But we rarely get the stories we want, and so here is how this one ends. Marta was not offered a spousal hire. After waiting another month and a half while a dual-career coordinator tried to find something for her, after ordering two PODS containers in which to store the boxes of all our belongings while we waited, after telling day cares and schools and parents and friends and colleagues that we still didn't know where we would be living the following year, Marta was eventually told that there was no job the University of Michigan could offer her. Delaying the search until after the end of the semester was part of the problem, but it was also possible that Michigan would never have been able to find something for her. In which case, if J. had just waited, he might have been offered the job anyway.

And so, at the end of June, I turned down a job I was offered four and a half months before.

We also named J. as a defendant in our suit. I worried at first about what he would do when he received the news, but as far as I know, J. did not try to harm himself. Instead, he began reporting that someone was trying to hurt him. Four days after he was served, J. posted that his university and private email accounts had been hacked. His colleagues started receiving emails from those accounts with messages calling him a faggot.

Five days after he was served, J. claimed he received an anonymous email from a so-called burner account. In that email, someone claiming to be his stalker wrote that he was in love with J. and that being rejected by him had caused "a mental break i cannot explain."

"i began trolling you online, sent death threats, broke into your house when you were gone," the person wrote. "i tried to [expletive] up your job applications by getting into your [work] email, i trolled a friend of yours in arizona…"

The confession read like the end of a "Scooby-Doo" episode, when the mask is pulled off and the criminal lays out his line of transgressions. It was the kind of confession I had once hoped J. would give us.

A week after J. was served, he emailed the police at his university to say that his stalker had thrown a rock through his car window. He attached a photo of the shattered glass, along with a handwritten note that read "STOP TRYING TO FIND ME."

By the time a response was due from J. regarding our lawsuit, I already knew what he would say. All the bricks came tumbling down, but they had been rebuilt into enough of a structure that the only way to prove his story false would be to go to court. We had paid more than $10,000 in legal fees at that point. Our lawyer told us that taking the case to court could cost tens of thousands more. We thought about it. We argued about it. But in the end, we decided we weren't willing to pay for more truth.

I think a lot about that scene of snow and two little girls on a bed, one with a loose tooth. How facts are like that. They tell different stories depending on who is picking them out and placing them in a narrative line. The most reliable way to find the truth in any moment is to have someone come clean, the way that little girl did when I entered the room. But I don't believe J. will ever do that.

At the end of July, we settled our lawsuit. Per that agreement, we can write or say anything we want about what happened. We can tell the whole story, using any and all of the facts. But we made one major concession: We cannot use J.'s real name.

At the time, the concession seemed worth it if it meant ending a story we needed to stop. But in the weeks and months since, I've wondered if we made a mistake. I think about all the people — friends, colleagues, students — whom J. will most likely continue to fool. I think how we never really know who is behind anything we read. Unless we have a physical person to pin it to. But then I realized this story isn't about J. It's about us.

If I could return to that job interview from more than three years ago, to that moment when I was asked about my responsibility as a creative-nonfiction writer in the post-truth world, I know what I would say now: Our allegiance as nonfiction writers is not so much to truth as it is to honesty. Because truth can be spoken into a void, while honesty implies an audience, a reader, real people to whom you commit to tell your story as accurately and truthfully as you can so that they can then differentiate for themselves the facts from the lies, the truth from the fiction.

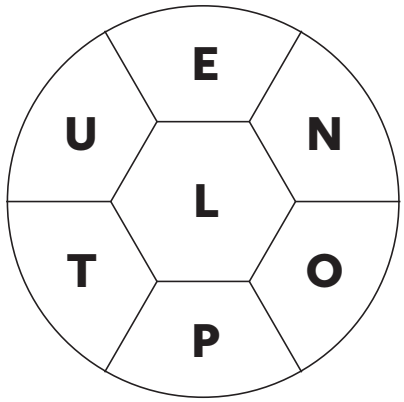
I've done that here. Now the story belongs to you. ◆

SPELLING BEE

By Frank Longo

How many common words of 5 or more letters can you spell using the letters in the hive? Every answer must use the center letter at least once. Letters may be reused in a word. At least one word will use all 7 letters. Proper names and hyphenated words are not allowed. Score 1 point for each answer, and 3 points for a word that uses all 7 letters.

Rating: 6 = good; 14 = excellent; 20 = genius



Our list of words, worth 23 points, appears with last week's answers.

TRADE-INS

By Patrick Berry

The answer to each clue contains a five-letter palindromic sequence, which can been changed to a single new letter to form one of the 10 words at the bottom. For example, if a clue's answer were BAR BRAWL, the sequence ARBRA could be changed to an O to make BOWL. Put the letter that replaces each palindromic sequence into the blank provided. The result, reading down, will be an appropriate phrase.

___ South Atlantic island chain where a war was fought in 1982

___ People who assume lupine form during full moons

___ Hunter's contraption that latches onto an animal's leg (2 wds.)

___ What sentimental films are trying to pull?

___ Device that corrects for pop singers' mistakes (hyph.)

___ Stand-in for scenes where an actor's face isn't shown (2 wds.)

___ Con artist's glib talk that's also a fruit extract (2 wds.)

___ Plant valued as a source of latex (2 wds.)

___ Ancient monument on Salisbury Plain

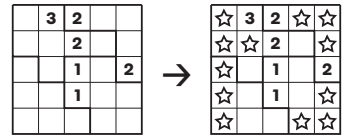
___ Nine-tenths of the law, proverbially

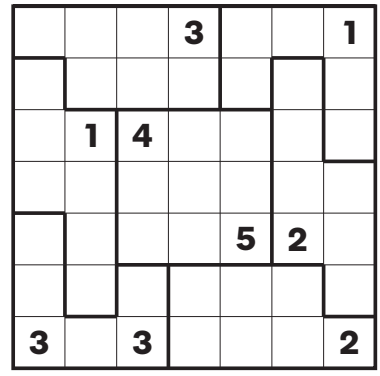
ACNE **BAUBLE** **BEEP** **BROIL** **FUNDS**
HEADINGS **POTION** **RUBBLE** **SOLVES** **STOOGE**

TRIPLE TREASURE

By Ashish Kumar

In each outlined region, locate three treasure chests. A number indicates how many of the neighboring cells (horizontally, vertically and diagonally) contain chests. A chest cannot appear in a cell with a number.



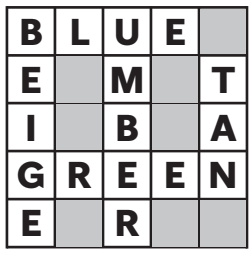


CROSS TIES

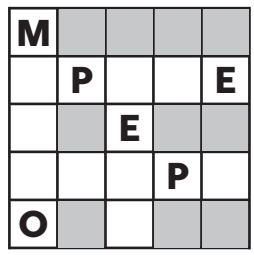
By Will Shortz

Complete each miniature crossword grid with a set of words or names that are all in the same category. In the example, BLUE, GREEN, BEIGE, UMBER and TAN are all colors. Some letters are given to start you off.

Ex.

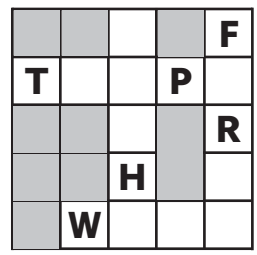


1.



2.

3.



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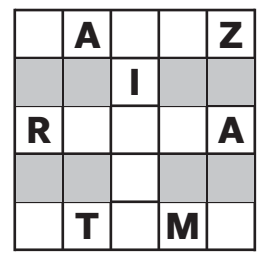

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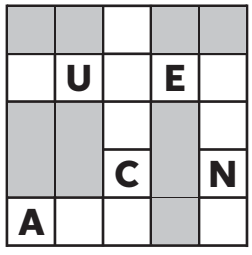

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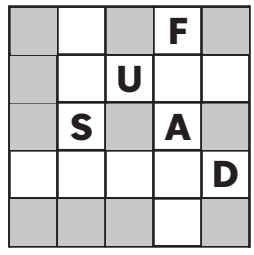

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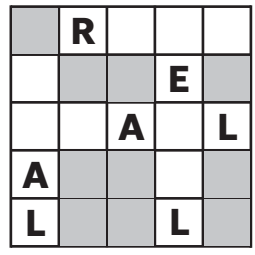

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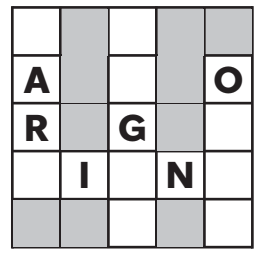

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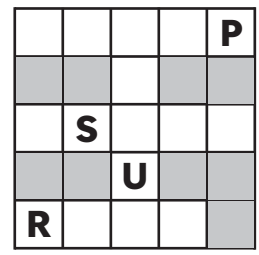


Answers to puzzles of 3.15.20

READY, SET ... GETS LOW!

A	B	B	A	■	I	C	U	■	S	C	A	D	S	■	A	P	C	A	L	C
D	E	E	D	■	F	O	P	■	O	A	K	E	N	■	H	O	O	R	A	H
A	L	L	H	A	I	L	H	A	L	L	A	L	E	■	A	R	M	A	N	I
G	L	I	D	E	■	L	I	B	E	L	■	G	A	G	■	K	A	N	Y	E
E	Y	E	■	I	T	A	L	O	■	■	R	A	K	E	D	■	■	C	A	F
■	■	■	B	O	O	B	L	U	R	R	E	D	B	L	U	E	B	I	R	D
D	E	P	A	U	L	■	■	T	E	A	P	O	Y	■	B	R	A	N	D	O
I	M	A	N	■	I	C	E	■	I	M	O	■	■	E	L	I	T	I	S	M
S	O	N	E	R	V	O	U	S	N	O	S	E	R	V	I	C	E	■	■	■
U	T	E	■	D	E	N	C	H	■	N	E	M	E	A	N	■	A	X	E	S
S	E	R	R	A	■	C	H	A	N	■	D	E	N	S	■	H	U	E	V	O
E	S	A	U	■	W	A	R	R	E	D	■	N	O	I	R	E	■	D	E	W
■	■	■	S	T	E	V	E	D	O	R	E	D	I	V	A	S	T	O	R	E
S	A	L	T	I	N	E	■	■	P	A	T	■	R	E	D	■	O	U	S	T
A	G	E	I	S	T	■	A	G	E	N	T	S	■	■	I	D	O	T	O	O
D	U	T	C	H	T	O	W	N	T	O	U	C	H	D	O	W	N	■	■	■
T	I	M	■	■	O	R	E	O	S	■	■	R	A	I	S	E	■	S	P	F
A	L	E	U	T	■	R	E	C	■	S	T	O	N	Y	■	E	M	C	E	E
L	E	T	T	E	R	■	B	C	H	O	R	D	K	E	Y	B	O	A	R	D
E	R	R	A	T	A	■	I	H	O	P	E	■	I	R	E	■	O	N	C	E
S	A	Y	H	E	Y	■	T	I	P	S	Y	■	E	S	P	■	S	T	Y	X

KENKEN

4	2	3	1	5
3	4	2	5	1
5	3	1	2	4
1	5	4	3	2
2	1	5	4	3

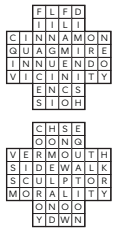
3	1	7	6	5	4	2
7	4	2	3	1	6	5
1	2	3	5	4	7	6
4	5	6	7	2	1	3
5	3	1	4	6	2	7
2	6	5	1	7	3	4
6	7	4	2	3	5	1

ACROSTIC

(RACHEL) CUSK, DRIVING AS METAPHOR — [A] person traveling by bicycle feels an antipathy towards cars, yet once inside a car can immediately become irritated by cyclists, and as a pedestrian could dislike them both, sometimes all in the course of a single day.

A. Cab Calloway
B. Unearthly
C. Sleepyhead
D. Katydids
E. Disbelief
F. Real McCoy
G. Icelandic
H. Valiant
I. Inference
J. Nineties
K. Golden
L. Automatic
M. Standard
N. Motor City
O. Emissions
P. Tigers
Q. "Abbey Road"
R. Petty cash
S. Hipsterism
T. Obstacles
U. Rename

CRAZY EIGHTS



TRIPLE TREASURE

☆	3		3	☆		
☆	☆		☆	☆	☆	1
	☆	☆	4	4		
	☆	☆	2	1	☆	☆
	3					☆
		☆		☆		☆
☆	☆	☆		1		☆

Answers to puzzle on Page 52

SPELLING BEE

Opulent (3 points). Also: Elope, lento, lepton, letup, lotto, lope, lunette, nettle, outlet, outpoll, pellet, peloton, people, pollen, pollute, pullet, pullout, topple, tulle, tunnel. If you found other legitimate dictionary words in the beehive, feel free to include them in your score.

Wing

(Continued from Page 27)

three dishes and Instagrammed it," a former employee says.

On a recent Thursday morning, I followed a trail of curvy white W's painted along a Williamsburg sidewalk up to the entrance of the Wing's newest club. In the elevator, I witnessed a real-life Winglet meet-cute: One woman read auras for GOOP; the other made $45 soaps for GOOP; they bonded over a healer they both knew. An eager young Wing employee met me at the front desk, and then I headed into the pink belly of the club, where Audrey Gelman was waiting for me.

Gelman wore a golden Wing necklace and an inviting smile. Flanked by the Wing's senior vice president for operations and an outside public-relations professional, she listened to the accounts of her employees and nodded thoughtfully. Despite their intention to build a women's utopia, she acknowledged, the ills of society at large had seeped in. "It's hard to hear that people have had this experience," she said. "These are familiar themes for us." Every employee concern, she assured me, had already been incorporated into a sweeping business recalibration. Even as it expanded, the Wing was overhauling its organizational structure, raising wages, extending benefits and instituting a code of conduct for members which, if violated, could result in the "clipping of wings" — termination of membership.

Gelman reiterated an article published on Feb. 26 in Fast Company, in which she wrote that she had tried to play the role of the perfect "girlboss," promoting the "fantasy" that a female founder could "have it all." But behind the scenes, she wrote, her "fear of failure" had led her to obscure the "real challenges" unfolding at the Wing. Wing workers, who had for years raised those very issues internally, wondered why the Wing only seemed to acknowledge them as members spoke up and journalists circled. But when Gelman posted her mea culpa on Instagram, glowing reviews flooded into the comments: "So important." "I didn't know I could love and admire you even more." "Bravo." Whatever improvements might be in store for its employees in the future, the Wing had already successfully fixed the flaw in its public reputation.

As the start-up world has reeled from the dizzying falls of toxic male founders like Uber's Travis Kalanick and WeWork's Adam Neumann, it has set its sights on a new kind of hero figure. Female entrepreneurs are paraded in the press as saviors of the market, even though they still receive relatively paltry sums from venture-capital firms. In their hands, the tensions of capitalism may be laundered through feminist messaging and come out looking bright and new. At the very least, corporate feminism can be defended as an incremental good. Yes, it may co-opt a political movement for profit, but it is moving the levers of capitalism for the benefit of women, tailoring products for female consumers and transferring cash into the coffers of women leaders.

When these women inevitably fail to secure female empowerment through retail offerings and exclusive hospitality experiences, it is suggested that it is perhaps sexist to criticize them. Men get away with so much. And yet this outpouring of sympathy rarely extends beyond the executive suite. When a feminist company falls short of its utopian vision, it is the workers who must toil to maintain the illusion. And they are women, too. ◆

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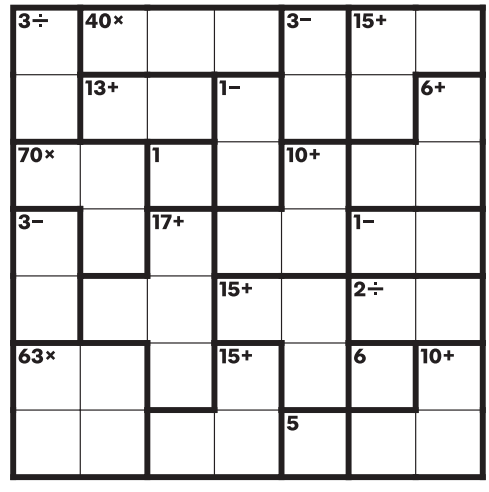
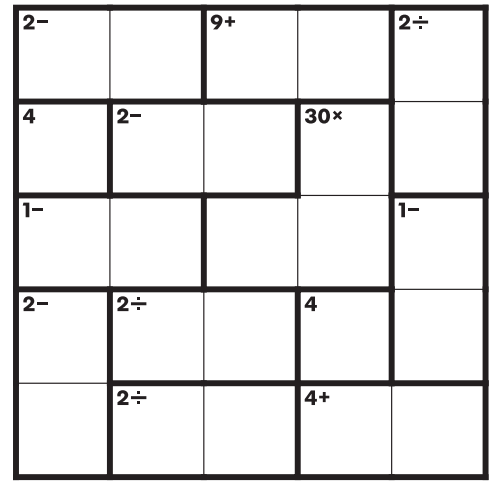
Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 5x5 grid will use the digits 1–5. A 7x7 grid will use 1–7.





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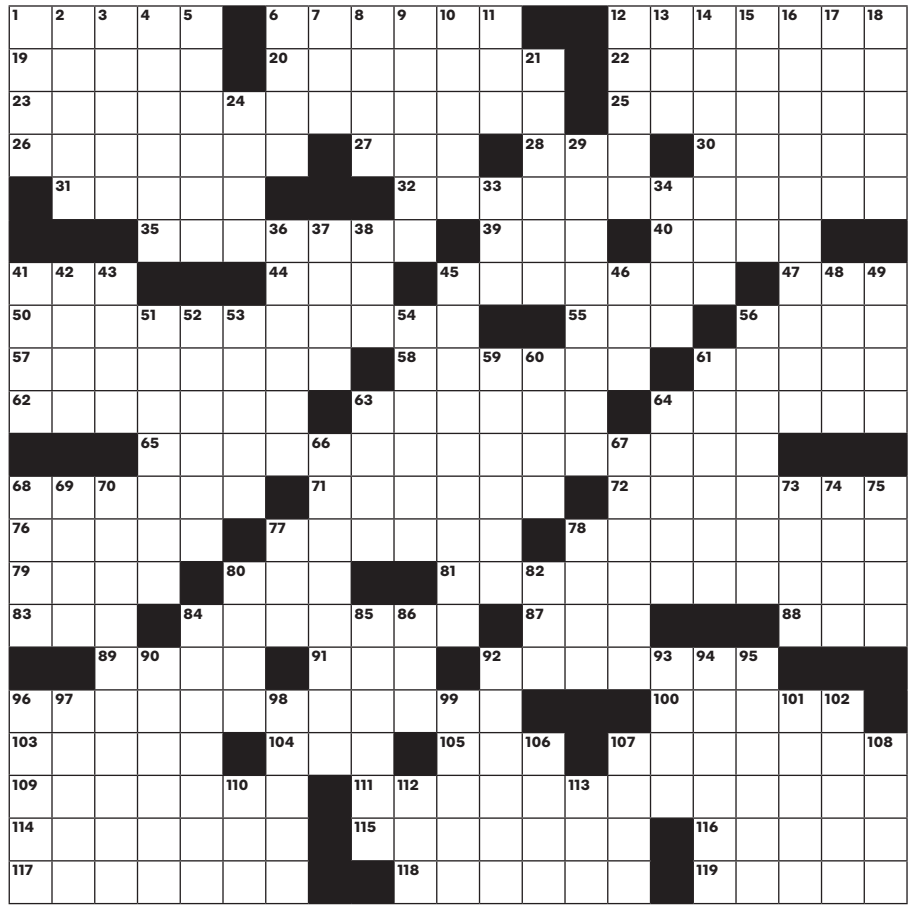
BRING YOUR 'A' GAME

By Brendan Emmett Quigley

Brendan Emmett Quigley of Brookline, Mass., has been creating puzzles for The Times since 1996, when he was a senior at college. This is his 170th regular crossword for the paper. For the past 12 years he has played for the Boston Typewriter Orchestra, a percussion ensemble whose only instruments are old typewriters. You can check them out on YouTube. Brendan's the member with glasses and a beard and who is follically challenged on top. — W.S.



3/22/20

ACROSS

1 Half of a 1960s folk-rock group
6 Action
12 Car thief's tool
19 Govt.-backed investment
20 Another name for the cornflower
22 Vacuum tube with five active components
23 What the church's music director wanted to do?
25 Stick in a church
26 Difficult problem
27 "I'm With __" (2016 campaign slogan)
28 Broadband overseer, for short
30 Up
31 Nasty words
32 Truism about unwanted sound?
35 Dull
39 Indian term of address
40 Call __ early night
41 Sch. on the Mississippi River
44 Robustness
45 Pounds
47 Chatter
50 Greatly dismay one of the Beatles?
55 Picture cards
56 Carousel figure
57 Staple in Creole cooking
58 West Indies city that's home to Lynden Pindling International Airport
61 Classic Halloween costume
62 Affirmed under oath
63 Literary character whose house is uprooted by a tornado
64 Shade similar to claret
65 Times when your archenemy shows up?
68 Decorative throw
71 Quaint giggle
72 In a daze
76 Native of Hrvatska, e.g.
77 One of the Ramones
78 Dipped in egg and bread crumbs, then fried
79 Consider
80 Unimpressive brain size
81 What the antigovernment activist does?
83 Acct. holdings
84 Setting of a 1903 Victor Herbert operetta
87 Spanish letter with a tilde
88 Little kid
89 __ doble (dance)
91 What's not a good fit?
92 Halloween haul
96 "Aye" or "Oui"?
100 Anne of fashion
103 Pertaining to the lowest possible level
104 Rep.'s opponent
105 One of the N.H.L.'s original six teams: Abbr.
107 Scholarly
109 Facing a judge
111 Geronimo, when his beard was just coming in?
114 Former Indianapolis arena
115 Didn't go out
116 America's foe in an 1898 war
117 Noted satellite of 1962
118 Some green sauces
119 Very small

DOWN

1 Some book-fair organizers, for short
2 "The Good Doctor" airer
3 Arouse
4 Class Notes subjects
5 Get into with little effort
6 One who asks "Got your ears on?"
7 Rio hello
8 Significantly
9 Take from the top?
10 Nut seen on the back of a dime
11 __ chi ch'uan (martial art)
12 Liven (up)
13 Billionaire Blavatnik
14 Recites, as a spell
15 Sight from Catania, in brief
16 Frontman whom People magazine once named "sexiest rock star"
17 "Methinks … "
18 Matches
21 Co. that might hire influencers
24 Radiation units
29 TV show with the theme song "Won't Get Fooled Again"
33 Sch. whose mascot is Brutus Buckeye
34 Suffers (from)
36 1887 Chekhov play
37 Spots at the card table
38 "__ bit confused"
41 Director von Trier
42 Gush
43 Hairstyle that calls for a lot of spray
45 Do some prescheduling
46 Ending with "umich."
48 Black birds
49 Actor Noah of "ER"
51 Prophet believed to be buried in the Cave of the Patriarchs
52 Eye luridly
53 Foreign language seen on U.S. money
54 In mint condition
56 Avatar
59 Park place?
60 Extremely dry
61 Symbols of change, in math
63 Protected on a boat
64 Bathroom sealant
66 Ravaged, as mosquitoes might
67 Spoke aloud
68 Rock band whose lead guitarist notably dresses in a schoolboy uniform
69 Actor Armisen
70 Flies into a violent rage
73 Sci-fi bounty hunter Boba __
74 Golfer Aoki
75 Reach out with one's hands?
77 Susan of "L.A. Law"
78 Abolitionist Horace
80 Spot for cannonballs
82 Part of a Victorian social schedule
84 Who wrote, "This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper"
85 Enticing smells
86 In mint condition
90 Some honors
92 Polishing aids
93 Flatpack retailer
94 Go by
95 Mexican wrap
96 Cancel early
97 Former secretary of state Cyrus
98 Psychotherapist Alfred
99 Diminish
101 Like Machu Picchu
102 Some fruit-flavored sodas
106 __-free
107 Caustic cleaners
108 Not allow
110 Residency org.
112 Trivial content
113 Benefits plan, maybe

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